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THE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

WILLIAM LAW, A.M.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

CONTAINING

I. The Spirit of Prayer; or, the Soul rising out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. In Two Parts.

II. The Way to Divine Knowledge; being several Dialogues between Humanus, Academicus, Rusticus, and Theophilus.

LONDON:

Printed for J. RICHARDSON, in *Pater-Noster-Row.*

M,DCC,LXII.

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OR,

The SOUL Rising out of the

VANITY of TIME,

INTO THE

RICHES of ETERNITY.

PART I.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M. A.

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[Price One Shilling.]

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PART I.

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CHAP. I.

Treating of ſome Matters preparatory to the Spirit *of* PRAYER.

THE greateſt Part of Mankind, nay of Chriſtians, may be ſaid to be aſleep; and that particular Way of Life, which takes up each Man's Mind, Thoughts, and Actions, may very well be called his particular Dream. This Degree of Vanity is equally viſible in every Form and Order of Life. The Learned and the Ignorant, the Rich and the Poor, are all in the ſame State of Slumber; only paſſing away a ſhort Life in a different kind of Dream. But why ſo? It is becauſe Man has an Eternity within him, is born into this World, not for the Sake of living here, not for any Thing this World can give him, but only to have Time and Place, to become either an eternal Partaker of a divine Life with GOD, or to have an helliſh Eternity amongſt fallen Angels: And therefore, every Man who has not his Eye, his Heart,

and his Hands, continually governed by this twofold Eternity, may be juſtly ſaid to be faſt aſleep, to have no awakened Senſibility of Himſelf. And a Life devoted to the Intereſts, and Enjoyments of this World, ſpent and waſted in the Slavery of earthly Deſires, may be truly called a Dream, as having all the Shortneſs, Vanity, and Deluſion of a Dream; only with this great Difference, that when a Dream is over, nothing is loſt but Fictions and Fancies; but when the Dream of Life is ended *only* by Death, all that Eternity is loſt, for which we were brought into Being. Now there is no Miſery in this World, nothing that makes either the Life or Death of Man to be full of Calamity, but this Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of his State, into which he ſo willingly, nay obſtinately plunges himſelf. Every Thing that has the Nature of Evil and Diſtreſs in it, takes its Riſe from hence. Do but ſuppoſe a Man to know himſelf; that he comes into this World on no other Errand, but to riſe out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity; do but ſuppoſe him to govern his inward Thoughts and outward Actions by this View of himſelf, and then to him every Day has loſt all its Evil; Proſperity and Adverſity have no Difference, becauſe he receives and uſes them both in the ſame Spirit; Life and Death

are

are equally welcome, becauſe equally Parts of his Way to Eternity. For poor and miſerable as this Life is, we have all of us free Acceſs to all that is Great, and Good, and Happy; and carry within ourſelves a *Key* to all the Treaſures that Heaven has to beſtow upon us.—We ſtarve in the midſt of Plenty, groan under Infirmities, with the Remedy in our own Hands; live and die, without knowing and feeling any Thing of the *One*, *only Good*, whilſt we have it in our Power to know and enjoy it in as great a Reality, as we know and feel the Power of this World over us: For Heaven is as near to our Souls, as this World is to our Bodies; and we are created, we are redeemed, to have our Converſation in it. GOD, the only Good of all intelligent Natures, is not an abſent or diſtant God, but is more preſent *in* and *to* our Souls, than our own Bodies; and we are Strangers to Heaven, and without GOD in the World, for this only Reaſon, becauſe we are void of that Spirit of Prayer, which alone can, and never fails to unite us with the *One*, *only* Good, and to open Heaven and the Kingdom of GOD within us. A Root ſet in the fineſt Soil, in the beſt Climate, and bleſſed with all that Sun, and Air, and Rain can do for it, is not in ſo ſure a Way of its Growth to Perfection, as every Man may be, whoſe Spirit aſpires

after all that, which GOD is ready and infinitely desirous to give him. For the *Sun* meets not the springing Bud that stretches towards him, with half that Certainty, as GOD, the Source of all Good, communicates himself to the Soul that longs to partake of Him.

We are all of us, by Birth, the Offspring of GOD, more nearly related to him, than we are to one another; for *in him we live, and move, and have our Being*. The first Man that was brought forth from GOD, had the Breath and Spirit of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* breathed into him, and so he became a living Soul. Thus was our first Father born of GOD, descended from Him, and stood in Paradise in the Image and Likeness of GOD. He was the Image and Likeness of GOD, not with any Regard to his outward Shape or Form, for no Shape has any Likeness to GOD; but he was in the Image and Likeness of GOD, because the Holy Trinity had breathed their own Nature and Spirit into him. And as the Deity, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, are always in Heaven, and make Heaven to be every where; so this Spirit, breathed by them into Man, brought Heaven into Man along with it; and so Man was in Heaven, as well as on Earth, that is, in Paradise, which signifies an heavenly State, or Birth of Life.

Adam had all that Divine Nature, both as to an heavenly *Spirit*, and heavenly *Body*, which the Angels have: But as he was brought forth to be a Lord, and Ruler of a new World, created out of the *Chaos*, or *Ruins* of the Kingdom of fallen Angels; so it was necessary that he should also have the Nature of this new created World in himself, both as to its *Spirit* and *Materiality*. Hence it was, that he had a Body taken from this new created Earth, not such dead Earth as we now make *Bricks* of, but the *blessed* Earth of Paradise, that had the Powers of Heaven in it, out of which the *Tree of Life* itself could grow. Into the Nostrils of this outward Body, was the Breath or *Spirit* of this World breathed; and in this Spirit and Body of this World, did the inward celestial Spirit and Body of *Adam* dwell: It was the *Medium* or *Means* through which he was to have Commerce with this World, become visible to its Creatures, and rule over it and them. Thus stood our first Father; an Angel both as to Body and Spirit (as he will be again after the Resurrection) yet dwelling in a Body and Spirit taken from this new created World; which however was as inferior to him, as subject to him, as the Earth and all its Creatures were. It was no more alive in him, no more brought forth its Nature within

him, than *Satan* and the Serpent were alive in him at his first Creation. And herein lay the Ground of *Adam*'s Ignorance of Good and Evil; it was because his outward Body, and the outward World, (in which alone was Good and Evil) could not discover their own Nature, or open their own Life within him, but were kept unactive by the Power and Life of the celestial Man within it. And this was Man's first and great Trial; a Trial, not imposed upon him by the mere Will of GOD, or by Way of Experiment; but a Trial necessarily implied in the Nature of his State: He was created an Angel, both as to Body and Spirit; and this Angel stood in an outward Body, of the Nature of the outward World; and therefore, by the Nature of his State, he had his Trial, or *Power* of choosing, whether he would live as an Angel, using only his outward Body as a Means of opening the Wonders of the outward World to the Glory of his Creator; or whether he would turn his Desire to the opening of the bestial Life of the outward World in himself, for the Sake of *knowing the Good and Evil* that was in it. The Fact is certain, that he lusted after the Knowledge of this Good and Evil, and made use of the Means to obtain it. No sooner had he got this Knowledge, by the opening the bestial Life and Sensibility within him,

him, but in that Day, nay, in that Inſtant, *he died*; that is, his heavenly Spirit, with its heavenly Body, were both extinguiſhed in him; but his Soul, an immortal Fire that could not die, became a poor Slave in Priſon of beſtial Fleſh and Blood. See here the Nature and Neceſſity of our Redemption; it is to redeem the firſt Angelick Nature that departed from *Adam*; it is to make that heavenly Spirit and Body which *Adam* loſt, to be alive again in all the human Nature; and this is called *Regeneration*: See alſo the true Reaſon why only the *Son*, or *Eternal Word* of GOD, could be our Redeemer; it is becauſe He alone, by whom all Things were at firſt made, could be able to bring to Life again that celeſtial Spirit and Body which had departed from *Adam*: See alſo why our bleſſed Redeemer ſaid, *Except a Man be born again, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* He muſt be born again of the *Spirit*, becauſe *Adam*'s firſt heavenly *Spirit* was loſt: He muſt be born again of *Water*, becauſe that heavenly Body which *Adam* loſt, was formed out of the heavenly Materiality, which is called *Water*. Thus in the *Revelation* of St. *John*, the heavenly Materiality, out of which the Bodies of the Angels, and alſo of *Adam*, were formed, is called a *glaſſy Sea*,

as

as being the neareſt and trueſt Repreſentation of it that can be made to our Minds. The Neceſſity of our regaining our firſt heavenly Body, is the Neceſſity of our eating the Body and Blood of CHRIST. The Neceſſity of having again our firſt heavenly Spirit, is declared, by the Neceſſity of our being baptized by the Holy Ghoſt. Our *Fall* is nothing elſe, but the Falling of our Soul from this celeſtial Body and Spirit, into a *beſtial* Body and Spirit of this World. Our riſing out of our fallen State, or Redemption, is nothing elſe but the regaining our firſt angelick Spirit and Body, which in Scripture is called our *inward*, or *new Man, created again in Chriſt Jeſus.* See here, laſtly, the true Ground of all the Mortifications of Fleſh and Blood, required in the Goſpel; it is becauſe this *beſtial Life* of this outward World ſhould not have been opened in Man; it is his Separation from GOD, and Death to the Kingdom of Heaven; and therefore, all its *Workings*, *Appetites*, and *Deſires*, are to be reſtrained and kept under, that the firſt heavenly Life, to which *Adam* died, may have Room to riſe up in us.

But to return. That *Adam* was thus an Angel at his firſt Creation, dwelling in an outward Body and outward World, incapable of receiving any Impreſſions from them, and able

to

to rule them at his Pleasure; that all outward Nature was a State of Life *below* him, in Subjection to him; that neither Sun, nor Stars, nor Fire, nor Water, nor Earth, nor Stones, could act upon him, or hurt him, is undeniably plain from hence; because his first and great Sin, which cost him his angelical Life, and took from him his Crown of Glory, consisted in this, That he lusted to know, and took the Means of knowing, what Good and Evil is in the bestial Life of this World: For this plainly demonstrates, that before his Sin, whilst he stood in the first State of his Creation, that he was an Angel in Nature and Power, that neither his *own outward* Body, nor any Part of outward Nature, had any Power in him or upon him; for had his own outward Body, or any Element of outward Nature, had any Power to act upon him, to make any Impressions, or raise any Sensations in him, he could not have been ignorant of Good and Evil in this World. Therefore, seeing that his eating of the forbidden Tree, was that alone which opened this Knowledge in him, it is a Demonstration, that in his first State he was in this World as an Angel, that was put into the Possession of it only to rule as a superior Being over it; that he was to have no Share of its Life and Nature, no Feeling of Good

or Evil from it; but to act in it as an heavenly Artist, that had Power and Skill to open the Wonders of GOD in every Power of outward Nature. An Angel, we read, used at a certain Time to come down into a *Pool* at *Jerusalem*, the Water stirred by the Angel gave forth its Virtues, but the Angel felt no Impressions of *Weight*, or *Cold* from the Water. This is an Image of *Adam*'s first Freedom from, and Power over all outward Nature. He could, wherever he went, do as this Angel did, make every Element, and elementary Thing, discover all the Riches of GOD, that were hidden in it, without feeling any Impressions of any kind from it. This was to have been the Work both of *Adam* and his Offspring, to make all the Creation shew forth the Glory of GOD, to spread Paradise over all the Earth, till the Time came, that all the Good in this World was to be called back to its first State, and all the Evil in every Part, left to be possessed by the Devil and his Angels. But since He fell from this first State into an *Animal* of this World, his Work is changed, and he must now labour with Sweat to *till* the cursed Earth, both for Himself and the Beasts upon it.

Let

Let us now consider some plain and important Truths that follow from what has been said above.

First, It is plain that the Sin and Fall of *Adam* did not consist in this, *viz.* that He had only committed *a single Act of Disobedience*, and so might have been just as He was before, if God had pleased to overlook this *single Act* of Disobedience, and not to have brought a Curse upon Him and his Posterity for it.— Nothing of this is the Truth of the Matter, either on the Part of God, or on the Part of Man.

Secondly, It is plain also, that the Command of God, not to lust after, and eat of the forbidden Tree, was not an *arbitrary* Command of God, given at Pleasure, or as a mere Trial of Man's Obedience; but was a most kind and loving *Information* given by the God of Love to his new born Offspring, concerning the State He was in, with Regard to the outward World: Warning Him to withdraw all Desire of entring into a *Sensibility* of its Good and Evil; because such Sensibility could not be had, without his immediate dying to that divine and heavenly Life, which He then enjoy'd. *Eat not*, says the God of Love, *of*

the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, for in the Day thou eateſt thereof, thou wilt ſurely die.

As if it had been ſaid; 'I have brought 'Thee into this Paradiſe, with ſuch a Nature 'as the Angels have in Heaven. By the 'Order and Dignity of thy Creation, every 'Thing that lives and moves in this World, 'is made ſubject to Thee, as to their Ruler. 'I have made Thee in thy outward Body of 'this World, to be for a Time a little lower 'than the Angels, till Thou haſt brought 'forth a numerous Offspring, fit for that 'Kingdom which They have loſt. The 'World around Thee, and the Life which is 'newly awaken'd in it, is much lower than 'Thou art; of a Nature quite inferior to 'thine. It is a groſs, corruptible State of 'Things, that cannot ſtand long before me; 'but muſt for a while bear the Marks of 'thoſe Creatures, which firſt made Evil to 'be known in the Creation. The Angels, 'that firſt inhabited this Region, where Thou 'art to bring forth a new Order of Beings, 'were great and powerful Spirits, highly en-'dow'd with the Riches and Powers of their 'Creator. Whilſt they ſtood (as the Order 'of Creation requires) in Meekneſs and Re-'ſignation, under their Creator, nothing was

'impoſſible

' impoſſible to them; there was no end of
' their glorious Powers throughout their whole
' Kingdom. Perpetual Scenes of Light, and
' Glory, and Beauty, were riſing and chang-
' ing through all the Heighth and Depth of
' their *glaſſy Sea*, merely at their Will and
' Pleaſure. But finding what Wonders of
' Light and Glory they could perpetually
' bring forth; how all the *Powers* of Eterni-
' ty, treaſured up in their *glaſſy Sea*, unfold-
' ed themſelves, and broke forth in raviſhing
' Forms of Wonder and Delight, merely in
' Obedience to their Call; they began to ad-
' mire and even adore themſelves, and to fan-
' ſy, that there was *ſome Infinity of Power*
' *hidden* in themſelves; which they ſuppoſed
' was kept under, and ſuppreſſed, by that
' Meekneſs, and Subjection to GOD, under
' which they acted. Fired and intoxicated
' with this proud Imagination, they boldly
' reſolved, with all their eternal Energy and
' Strength, to take their Kingdom, with all
' its Glories, to themſelves; by eternally ab-
' juring all Meekneſs and Submiſſion to GOD.
' No ſooner did their eternal, potent Deſires,
' fly in this Direction of a Revolt from GOD,
' but in the Swiftneſs of a Thought, Heaven
' was loſt; and they found themſelves dark
' Spirits, ſtripped of all their Light and Glory.

' Inſtead

‘ Instead of Rising up above God, (as they
‘ hoped) by breaking off from Him, there
‘ was no End of their eternal Sinking into
‘ new Depths of Slavery, under their own
‘ self-tormenting Natures. As a Wheel go-
‘ ing down a Mountain, that has no Bottom,
‘ must continually keep on its Turning, so
‘ are they whirl'd down by the Impetuosi-
‘ ty of their own wrong turn'd Wills, in a
‘ continual Descent from the Fountain of all
‘ Glory, into the bottomless Depths of their
‘ own dark, fiery, working Powers. In no
‘ Hell, but what their own natural Strength
‘ had awaken'd; bound in no Chains, but
‘ their own unbending, harden'd Spirits;
‘ made such, by their renouncing, with all
‘ their eternal Strength, all Meekness, and
‘ Subjection to God. In that Moment, the
‘ beautiful Materiality of their Kingdom,
‘ their *glassy Sea* in which they dwelt, was,
‘ by the wrathful rebellious Workings of these
‘ apostate Spirits, broke all into Pieces; and
‘ became a black Lake, a horrible Chaos of
‘ Fire and Wrath, Thickness and Darkness,
‘ a Heighth and Depth of the confused, di-
‘ vided, fighting Properties of Nature. My
‘ creating *Fiat* stopp'd the Workings of these
‘ rebellious Spirits, by dividing the Ruins of
‘ their wasted Kingdom, into an Earth, a

‘ Sun,

' Suns, Stars, and ſeparated Elements. Had
' not this Revolt of Angels brought forth that
' diſordered *Chaos*, no ſuch Materiality as this
' outward World is made of, had ever been
' known. Groſs compacted Earth, Stones,
' Rocks, wrathful Fire here, dead Water
' there, fighting Elements, with all their groſs
' Vegetables and Animals, are Things not
' known in Eternity, and will be only ſeen
' in Time, till the great Deſigns are finiſhed,
' for which Thou art brought forth in Para-
' diſe. And then, as a Fire awaken'd by the
' Rebel Creature, began all the Diſorders of
' Nature, and turned that glaſſy Sea into a
' Chaos, ſo a *laſt Fire*, kindled at my Word,
' ſhall thoroughly purge the Floor of this
' World. In thoſe purifying Flames, the
' Sun, the Stars, the Air, the Earth and Wa-
' ter, ſhall part with all their Droſs, Dead-
' neſs, and Diviſion, and all become again
' that firſt, heavenly Materiality, a *glaſſy Sea*
' of everlaſting Light and Glory, in which
' Thou and thy Offſpring ſhall ſing Hallelu-
' jah's to all Eternity. Look not therefore,
' thou Child of Paradiſe, thou Son of Eterni-
' ty, look not with a longing Eye after any
' Thing in this outward World. There are
' the Remains of the fallen Angels in it; Thou
' haſt nothing to do in it, but as a Ruler

' over it. It ſtands before Thee, as a Myſ-
' tery big with Wonders; and Thou, whilſt
' an Angel in Paradiſe, haſt Power to open
' and diſplay them all. It ſtands not in thy
' Sphere of Exiſtence; it is, as it were, but
' a Picture, and tranſitory Figure of Things;
' for all that is not Eternal, is but as an Image
' in a Glaſs, that ſeems to have a Reality,
' which it hath not. The Life which ſprings
' up in this Figure of a World, in ſuch an
' infinite Variety of Kinds and Degrees, is but
' as a Shadow; it is a Life of ſuch Days and
' Years, as in Eternity have no Diſtinction
' from a Moment. It is a Life of ſuch Ani-
' mals and Inſects, as are without any divine
' Senſe, Capacity, or Feeling. Their Natures
' have nothing in them, but what I command-
' ed this new modell'd *Chaos*, this Order of
' Stars and fighting Elements, to bring forth.

' Now *Adam*, obſerve, I will open to
' Thee a great Myſtery. The heavenly Ma-
' teriality of the Angels Kingdom before their
' Revolt was a *glaſſy Sea*, a Mirror of beau-
' teous Forms, Figures, Virtues, Powers, Co-
' lours, and Sounds, which were perpetually
' ſpringing up, appearing and changing in an
' infinite Variety, to the Manifeſtation of the
' Wonders of the divine Nature, and to the
' Joy of all the Angelical Kingdom. This

' heavenly

‘ heavenly Materiality had its Fruits and
‘ Vegetables, much more real than any that
‘ grow in Time, but as different from the
‘ Groſſneſs of the Fruits of this World, as
‘ the heavenly Body of an Angel is different
‘ from the Body of the groſſeſt Beaſt upon
‘ Earth. In this angelical Kingdom, the *one*
‘ Element (which is now in four Parts) was
‘ then a fruitful Mother of Wonders, con-
‘ tinually bringing forth new *Forms* and *Fi-*
‘ *gures of Life*; not Animals, Beaſts, or In-
‘ ſects, but beautiful *Figures*, and *ideal* Forms
‘ of the endleſs Diviſibility, and Degrees of
‘ Life, which only broke forth as delightful
‘ Wonders of the Depth of the Riches of
‘ the Divine Nature, and to tune the Voices
‘ of Angels with Songs of Praiſe to the infi-
‘ nite Source of Life. And hence, O *Adam*,
‘ is that endleſs infinite Variety both of the
‘ animal and vegetable Life in this periſhable
‘ World. For no Fruits of Vegetables could
‘ have ſprung up in the divided Elements,
‘ but becauſe they are the divided Parts of
‘ that one heavenly Materiality, or *glaſſy Sea*,
‘ in which angelical Fruits had formerly
‘ grown forth. No animal Life could have
‘ aroſe from Stars, Air, and Water, but be-
‘ cauſe they are all of them the groſs Remains
‘ of that one Element, in which the *Figures*

' and *Images* of Life had once risen up in ' such an infinite Variety of Degrees and ' Kinds. Hence it was, that when my ' creating *Fiat* spoke to these new ranged ' Stars, and Elements, and bid Life awaken ' in them all *according to its Kind*, they all ' obey'd my Word, and every Property of ' Nature strove to bring forth, after the *Kind* ' and *Manner* as it had done in the Region of ' Eternity. This, my Son, is the Source and ' Original of all that infinite Variety, and De- ' grees of Life, both of Animals and Vegeta- ' bles, in this World. It is because all out- ' ward Nature, being fallen from Heaven, ' must yet, as well as it can, do and work, ' as it had done in Heaven.

' In Heaven, all Births and Growths, all ' Figures and spiritual Forms of Life, though ' infinite in Variety, are yet all of a heavenly ' Kind; and only so many Manifestations of ' the Goodness, Wisdom, Beauty, and Riches ' of the Divine Nature. But in this new ' modell'd *Chaos*, where the Disorders that ' were raised by *Lucifer* are not wholly re- ' moved, but Evil and Good must stand in ' Strife, till the last purifying Fire, here eve- ' ry Kind and Degree of Life, like the World ' from whence it springs, is a Mixture of ' Good and Evil in its Birth.

' Therefore, my Son, be content with thy

' angelical

' angelical Nature, be content, as an Angel in
' Paradiſe, to eat Angels Food, and to rule
' over this mixed, imperfect, and periſhing
' World, without partaking of its corruptible,
' impure, and periſhing Nature. Luſt not
' to know *how* the Animals feel the Evil and
' Good which this Life affords them; for if
' Thou couldſt feel what they feel, Thou
' muſt be as they are; Thou canſt not have
' their *Senſibility*, unleſs Thou haſt their Na-
' ture: Thou canſt not at once be an Angel
' and an earthly Animal. If the beſtial Life
' is raiſed up in Thee, the ſame Inſtant the
' heavenly Birth of thy Nature muſt die in
' Thee. Therefore turn away thy Luſt and
' Imagination from a Tree, that can only help
' Thee to the Knowledge of ſuch Good and
' Evil, as belongs only to the Animals of this
' outward World; for nothing but the beſtial
' Nature can receive Good or Evil from the
' Stars and Elements: they have no Power,
' but over that Life which proceeds from
' them. Eat therefore only the Food of Pa-
' radiſe; be content with Angels Bread; for
' if Thou eateſt of this Tree, it will unavoid-
' ably awaken and open the beſtial Life
' within Thee; and in that Moment, all that
' is heavenly muſt die, and ceaſe to have any
' Power in Thee. And Thou muſt fall into
' a Slavery for Life, under the divided, fight-

'ing Powers of Stars and Elements. Stripp'd 'of thy angelical Garment, that hid thy out-'ward Body under its Glory, Thou wilt be-'come more naked than any Beaſt upon Earth, 'be forced to ſeek from Beaſts a Covering, to 'hide Thee from the Sight of thine own 'Eyes. A ſhameful, fearful, ſickly, wanting, 'ſuffering, and diſtreſſed Heir of the ſame 'ſpeedy Death in the Duſt of the Earth, as 'the poor Beaſts, whom Thou wilt thus have 'made to be thy Brethren.'

This Paraphraſe I leave to the Reflection of the Reader; and proceed to ſhew,

Thirdly, That the Miſery, Diſtreſs, and woful Condition, which *Adam* by his Tranſgreſſion brought upon Himſelf, and all his Poſterity, was not the Effect of any *ſevere, vindictive* Wrath *in* God, calling for Juſtice to his offended Sovereignty, and inflicting Pains and Puniſhments ſuitable to the Greatneſs of his juſt Indignation, and Anger at the diſobedient Creature.

If *Adam*, contrary to the Will of God, and for the ſake of ſome new-fancied Knowledge, had broke both his own Legs, and put out both his Eyes, could it with any Shew of Truth and Reaſon have been ſaid, That God, in the Severity of his Wrath at ſo heinous

heinous an Offence, had punished *Adam* with *Lameness* and *Blindness?* And if it be further supposed, that GOD seeing *Adam* lying in this lame and blind Condition, came and spoke kindly to him, informing him of a *Secret of Love*, which He had in Heaven, which He promised to send him immediately by his highest Messenger of Love; assuring him, that by the Use of this heavenly *Secret* or *divine Power*, his Legs and Eyes should, in some Course of Time, be infallibly restored to him, even in a better State than they were in at the first; must it not be still more unreasonable and absurd, to charge any thing of this *Lameness* and *Blindness* upon a *Wrath* in GOD kindled against *Adam?* Nay, is it not clear, in the highest Degree, that in all this Matter, *Adam* had nothing from GOD, but the Overflowings of mere Love and Goodness; and that he had no Lameness and Blindness, but from his own voluntary Acts upon himself.

This is a simple, but clear Representation of the Case, how Matters stood betwixt GOD and our first Father, when by his own Act and Deed, he extinguished that divine Life, in which GOD had created him. *Adam* had no more Hurt, no more Evil done to Him, at his Fall, than the very Nature of his *own Action* brought along with it upon himself.

He lusted to have the *Sensibility* of that Good and Evil, which the Beasts of this World have. He was told, that it could not be had without the Loss of his heavenly Life; because such Loss was as necessarily implied in the Nature of the Thing itself, as Blindness is implied in the Extinction of Eyes. However, he ventured to make the Trial, and chose to eat of That, which could and did open this *Sensibility* of earthly Good and Evil in him. No sooner was this Sensibility opened in him, but he found it to be a *Subjection* and *Slavery* to all outward Nature, to Heat and Cold, to Pains and Sickness, Horror of Mind, disturbed Passions, Misery, and Fears of Death. Which is in other Words only saying, that he found it to be an Extinction of that divine, angelical Nature, which till then had kept him insensible, and incapable of any hurtful Impressions, from any or all the Powers of this World. Therefore, to charge his miserable State, as a Punishment inflicted upon him by the severe Wrath of an incensed God, is the same Absurdity, as in the former supposed Lameness and Blindness. Because the whole Nature of all that miserable Change, both as to *Body* and *Soul*, which then came upon him, was neither more, nor less, than what was necessarily implied in that

which

which he chose to do to himself. And therefore had nothing of the Nature of a Punishment inflicted from *without*; but was only that which his own Action had done in and to himself: Just as the Man that puts out his own Eyes, has only that Darkness and Blindness, which his own Action has brought forth in himself.

From this short, yet plain and true Account of this Matter, we are at once delivered from a Load of Difficulties that have been raised about the *Fall* of Man, and *Original Sin*. It has been a great Question, How the Goodness of GOD could punish so *small* and *single* an Act of *Disobedience* in *Adam*, with so great a Punishment. Here the *Sovereignty* of GOD hath been appealed to, and hath set the Matter right; and from this Sovereignty, thus asserted, came forth the Systems of absolute *Election*, and absolute *Reprobation*. But for our Comfort it appears, that the Question here put, concerns neither GOD, nor Man, that it relates not at all to the Matter, and has no Existence, but in the Brains of those that formed it. For the Action in which *Adam*'s Sin consisted, was such an Act, as in *itself* implied *all that miserable Change* that came upon him; and so was not a *small*, or *single* Act of *Disobedience*, nor had the least Punishment,

ment, of any kind, inflicted by GOD upon it. All that GOD did on this Tranſgreſſion, was mere Love, Compaſſion, and Relief adminiſtred to it. All the Sovereignty that GOD here ſhewed, was a Sovereignty of Love to the fallen Creature. So that all the *Volumes* on this Queſtion may be laid aſide, as quite beſide the Point. Another, and the greateſt Queſtion of all, and which *Divines* of all ſorts have been ever ſolving, and yet never have ſolved, is this; *How it can conſiſt with the Goodneſs of* GOD, *to impute the Sin of* Adam *to all his Poſterity?* But here, to our Comfort again, it may be ſaid, that this Queſtion is equally a vain Fiction with the other, and has nothing to do with the Procedure of GOD towards Mankind. For there is *no Imputation* of the Sin of *Adam* to his Poſterity, and ſo no Foundation for a Diſpute upon it. How abſurd would it be to ſay, that GOD *imputes* the Nature, or the Body and Soul of *Adam* to his Poſterity? for have they not the Nature of *Adam* by a natural Birth from him, and not by Imputation from GOD? Now this is all the Sin that *Adam*'s Poſterity have from him, they have only their Fleſh and Blood, their Body and Soul from him, by a Birth from him, and not *imputed* to them from GOD. Inſtead therefore of the former Queſtion,

tion, which is quite beſide the Matter, it ſhould have been aſked thus, How it was conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of GOD, *that* Adam *could not generate Children of a* Nature *and* Kind *quite ſuperior to himſelf?* This is the only Queſtion that can be aſked with relation to GOD, and yet it is a Queſtion whoſe Abſurdity confutes itſelf. For the only Reaſon why Sin is found in all the Sons of *Adam*, is this, it is becauſe *Adam* of earthly Fleſh and Blood, cannot bring forth a holy Angel out of himſelf, but muſt beget Children of the ſame Nature and Condition with himſelf. And therefore here again it may be truly ſaid, that all the laborious Volumes on GOD's imputing *Adam*'s Sin to his Poſterity, ought to be conſidered as waſte Paper.

But farther, As it is thus evident from the Nature of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, that all his Miſery came from the Nature of his own Action, and that nothing was inflicted upon him, from a Wrath or Anger in GOD at him, ſo is it ſtill much more ſo, from a Conſideration of the Divine Nature. For it is a glorious and joyful Truth, (however ſuppreſſed in various Syſtems of Divinity) that from Eternity to Eternity, no Spark of Wrath ever was, or ever will be in the holy tri-une GOD. If a Wrath of GOD was any where, it muſt be

every where, if it burned once, it must burn to all Eternity. For every thing that is in GOD himself is boundless, incapable of any Increase or Diminution, without Beginning, and without End. It is as good Sense, as consistent with the Divine Nature, to say, that GOD, moved by a Wrath *in* and *from* Himself, began the Creation, as that a Wrath in GOD ever punished any Part of it. Nature and Creature is the only *Source* from whence, and the *Seat* in which, Wrath, Pain, and Vexation can dwell. Nor can they ever break forth either in *Nature*, or *Creature*, but so far as either this, or that, has lost its State in God. This is as certain, as that Storms and Tempests, Thunder and Lightnings have no Existence in Heaven. GOD, considered in Himself, is as infinitely separate from all Possibility of doing Hurt or willing Pain to any Creature, as He is from a Possibility of suffering Pain or Hurt from the Hand of a Man. And this, for this plain Reason, because He is in himself, in his holy Trinity, nothing else but the boundless Abyss of all that is Good, and Sweet and Amiable; and therefore stands in the utmost Contrariety to every thing, that is not a Blessing; in an eternal Impossibility of willing and intending a Moment's Pain or Hurt to any Creature. For from this un-

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bounded Source of Goodneſs and Perfection, nothing but infinite Streams of Bleſſing are perpetually flowing forth upon all Nature and Creature, in a more inceſſant Plenty, than Rays of Light ſtream from the Sun. And as the *Sun* has but one Nature, and can give forth nothing but the Bleſſings of Light; ſo the holy tri-une GOD has but *one* Nature and Intent towards all the Creation, which is, to pour forth the Riches and Sweetneſs of his divine Perfections, upon every Thing that is capable of them, and according to its Capacity to receive them.

The Goodneſs of GOD breaking forth into a Deſire *to communicate Good*, was the Cauſe and the Beginning of the Creation. Hence it follows, that to all Eternity, GOD can have no *Thought*, or *Intent* towards the Creature, but *to communicate Good*; becauſe He made the Creature for this ſole End, to receive Good. The firſt Motive towards the Creature is unchangeable; it takes its Riſe from GOD's Deſire *to communicate Good*, and it is an eternal Impoſſibility, that any Thing can ever come from GOD, as his *Will* and *Purpoſe* towards the Creature, but *that ſame Love and Goodneſs*, which firſt created it, He muſt always *will* that to it, which He *willed* at the Creation of it. This is the amiable Nature

of

of GOD, He is *the Good*, the unchangeable, overflowing Fountain of Good, that ſends forth nothing but Good to all Eternity. He is *the Love* itſelf, the unmixed, unmeaſurable Love, doing nothing but from Love, giving nothing but Gifts of Love, to every Thing that He has made; requiring nothing of all his Creatures, but the Spirit and Fruits of that Love, which brought them into Being. Oh how ſweet is this Contemplation of the Heighth and Depth of the Riches of Divine Love! With what Attraction muſt it draw every thoughtful Man, to return Love for Love to this overflowing Fountain of boundleſs Goodneſs? What Charms has that Religion, which diſcovers to us our Exiſtence in, Relation to, and Dependance upon this Ocean of divine Love! View every Part of our Redemption, from *Adam*'s firſt Sin, to the Reſurrection of the Dead, and you will find nothing but ſucceſſive Myſteries of that firſt Love, which created Angels and Men. All the Myſteries of the Goſpel are only ſo many Marks and Proofs of GOD's deſiring to make his Love triumph, in the Removal of Sin and Diſorder from all Nature and Creature.

But to return, and conſider farther the Nature of *Adam*'s Fall, we have ſeen that it conſiſted of no *arbitrary Puniſhment* inflicted on him

him by a Wrath raiſed *in* GOD, but was only ſuch a State of Miſery, as his own Action neceſſarily brought upon him. Let us now ſee what happened to his Soul, a little more diſtinctly, and how it differed from what it was before his Fall, in its heavenly State.

The Angels that kept their State, and thoſe that fell from it, were at firſt of one and the ſame Nature; the Angels that fell, did not loſe all their Nature, for then they muſt have fallen into *nothing*; they only loſt the heavenly and divine Part of it, and therefore there is ſomething ſtill remaining in them, that is alſo in the holy Angels, and which is common to both of them. Now this which they did not loſe, becauſe it cannot be loſt, is a certain *Root of Life*, or *Ground* of their Exiſtence, which when once in Being, cannot be broken, and in which the unceaſing Eternity, or Immortality of their Nature conſiſts, a *Root* or firſt Ground of Life, equally capable of a Heavenly Birth, or of a Birth and Growth into Hell. Now that there is this *Root* of Life in Angels, and that it is ſomething quite diſtinct from their heavenly Nature, is very plain from hence, that the Devils have loſt their *heavenly*, and yet have kept their *eternal* and *immortal* Nature, therefore that in which their Eternity, and Immortality conſiſts, muſt be ſomething

thing entirely distinct from their heavenly Nature, and must be also the same with *that*, in which the Eternity and Immortality of the holy Angels consists. For the fallen Angels have no other *eternal Root* in them, but that which they had before their Fall, and which they brought from Heaven; and therefore *that* which is, and must be eternal and undying in their Nature, is the *same eternal Root* of Life, which is in the Angels that kept their State. And consequently, the only Difference betwixt an Angel and a Devil, is this, that in the Angel its eternal *Root* of Life *generates* a Birth of the *Light* and holy *Spirit* of GOD in it; and in a Devil, this eternal Root of Life has lost *this Birth*, and the Power of bringing it forth again. Now here is to be truly seen the real Difference betwixt the Soul of *Adam* before, and after his Fall. Before his Fall, it had the Nature of an Angel of GOD, in which the divine Birth of the Light and holy Spirit of GOD sprung up, but when contrary to the Will, and Command of GOD, a bestial Life was awakened in him, the heavenly Life was necessarily extinguished. The Soul therefore having lost that heavenly Birth which made it like an Angel of GOD, had nothing remaining in it, but that eternal and immortal *Root* of Life, which is the very

Eſſence of a fallen Angel. But here we muſt obſerve a great and happy Difference, betwixt the Soul of *Adam*, tho' dead to all that was heavenly, and the Soul of a Devil. The Angels that extinguiſh'd the Birth of Heaven in themſelves, fell directly into the horrible Depths of their own ſtrong ſelf-tormenting Nature, or their *own Hell*, and that for theſe two Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe there was no where elſe for them to fall into, but into this tormenting Senſibility of their own fiery, wrathful, darkned Nature.

Secondly, Becauſe their Revolt from GOD, was an Attempt, and Intent to be higher and greater by awakening, and truſting to their own *natural Powers*, than they had hitherto been by Submiſſion to GOD. They would have a Greatneſs that ſprung only from *themſelves*, and therefore they found *That* which they ſought, they found themſelves left to all the *Greatneſs* that was in themſelves, and that was *their Hell*, *viz.* a fiery Strength of a ſelf-tormenting Nature, becauſe ſeparate from the one Source of Light and Love, of Peace and Joy.

But *Adam*, tho' his Soul was as entirely dead to Heaven, as the Souls of the Devils

were, yet fell not into *their Hell*, for these two Reasons.

First, Because his Angelical Man dwelt in a Body taken from this outward World, which Body did not die at his Transgression, therefore his Soul that had lost its Heavenly Light, did not fall directly into the Devil's Hell, but it fell into a Body of Earthly Flesh and Blood, which being capable of the Enjoyments and Satisfactions of this Life, could, whilst it lasted, keep the Soul insensible of its own fallen State, and hellish Condition.

Secondly, Because *Adam* not aspiring to be *above*, or *without* GOD by his own proud Strength, but only lusting to enter in a *Sensibility* of the Good and Evil of the bestial Life of this World: He found *only That* which he sought, and fell into no *other State* or Misery, than that bestial Life, which his own Actions and Desires had opened in him. And therefore this outward World stood him in great Stead, it prevented his immediate Falling into the State of Fallen Angels.

But then, as there was nothing that kept him out of the Hell of Fallen Angels, but his *Body* of Earthly Flesh and Blood, and as this was now as *mortal* in him, as it was in the Beasts, and lay at the Mercy of a thousand Accidents, that could every Moment take it

from him, so he was in his fallen State, standing as it were on the Brinks of Hell, liable every Moment to be pushed into it.

See here the *deep* Ground and *absolute* Necessity of that new Birth of the *Word, Son,* and *Spirit* of God which the Scripture speaks so much of. It is because our Soul, as fallen, is quite dead to, and separate from the Kingdom of Heaven, by having lost the Light and Spirit of God in itself; and therefore is, and must be incapable of entering into Heaven, till by this new Birth, the Soul gets again its first Heavenly Nature.

If thou hast nothing of this Birth when thy Body dies, then thou hast only that *Root* of Life in Thee, which the Devils have, thou art as far from Heaven, and as incapable of it, as they are; thy Nature is their Nature, and therefore their Habitation must be thine. For nothing can possibly hinder thy Union with Fallen Angels, when thou diest, but a Birth of *That* in thy Soul, which the fallen Angels have *lost*.

How pitiable therefore, or rather how hurtful is that *Learning*, which uses all its Art of Words, to avoid and lose the true Sense of our Saviour's Doctrine concerning the new Birth, which is necessary to fallen Man; by holding, that the Passages asserting the new

Birth, are only a *figurative*, ſtrong Form of Words concerning *ſomething*, that is not *really* a Birth, or Growth of a new Nature, but may, according to the beſt Rules of *Criticiſm*, ſignify, either our *Entrance* into the Society of Chriſtians, by the Rite of Baptiſm, or ſuch a new Relation, as a Scholar may have with his Maſter, who by a Conformity to Terms of Union, or by copying his Ways, and Manners, may, by a *Figure of Speech*, be ſaid to be born again of him.

Now let it here be obſerved, that no Paſſage of Scripture is to be called, or eſteemed as a *figurative* Expreſſion, but where the *literal* Meaning cannot be allow'd, as implying ſomething that is either *bad* in itſelf, or *impoſſible*, or *inconſiſtent* with ſome plain, and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is not the Caſe, here, is very evident. For who will preſume to ſay, that for the Soul of fallen Man to be born again of the Son, or Light, and Holy Spirit of God, is in the *literal* Senſe of the Words, a Thing *bad* in itſelf, or *impoſſible*, or *inconſiſtent* with any plain and undeniable Doctrines of Scripture? The *Criticks* therefore, who, in this Matter, leave the literal Meaning of the Words, and have Recourſe to a figurative Senſe, are without Excuſe, and have nothing they can urge as a Reaſon for ſo doing,

doing, but their own Skill in Words. But it may be further added as a juſt Charge againſt theſe *Criticks*, that their fixing theſe Paſſages to a figurative Meaning, is not only without any Ground, or Reaſon for ſo doing, but is alſo a *bad* Meaning, *impoſſible* to be true, and utterly *inconſiſtent* with the moſt plain, and fundamental Doctrines of Scripture. Now that this is the Caſe here, may in Part be ſeen by the following Inſtance.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that an human Body had loſt the *Light*, and *Air* of this World, and was in a State of Death, becauſe both theſe were quite extinguiſhed in it. Muſt it not be ſaid, that this human Body cannot ſee, or enter again into the Life of this World, unleſs the Light and Air of this World get again a *new Birth* in it? Is there here any Occaſion, or any Room to form a Doubt, how theſe Words are to be underſtood, or any Poſſibility to miſtake the Meaning of them? What a *Philoſopher* would he be, who for fear of being called an *Enthuſiaſt*, ſhould here deny the *literal* Meaning of a new Birth of *Light* and *Air*, and think himſelf ſufficiently juſtified in flying from it, becauſe in his great Reading, he had ſeen the Words, *Birth*, *Light* and *Air* ſometimes, and upon ſome Occaſions, uſed only in a *figurative* Senſe?

Now this is exactly, and to a Tittle the Case of the Soul, as fallen, and lying in the same State of Death to the Kingdom of GOD; till a *new Birth* of the Light, and Spirit of GOD be again brought forth in it. And therefore the *Necessity* of understanding these Words in their literal Meaning, the Absurdity of flying to a *figurative* Sense of the new Birth, and the *Impossibility* of that being the true one, is equally plain, and certain in both these Cases.

Now that the Soul, as fallen, is in this *real State* of Death, is a Doctrine not only plain from the whole Tenour of Scripture, but affirmed in all Systems of Divinity. For all hold, and teach, that Man *unredeem'd*, must at the Death of his Body, have fallen into a State of Misery, like that of the fallen Angels. But how can this be true, unless it be true, that the Life of Heaven was extinguish'd in the Soul? and that Man had really lost that Light, and Spirit of GOD, which alone can make any Being capable of living in Heaven. All therefore that I have here, and elsewhere said, concerning the Death of the Soul by its Fall, and its wanting a *real* new Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God in it, in order to its Salvation, cannot be deny'd, but by giving up this great, fundamental Doctrine, namely, *that Man in his fallen State,*

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and unredeemed, muſt have been eternally loſt. For it cannot be true, that the Fall of Man unredeemed, would have kept him for ever out of Heaven, but becauſe his Fall had abſolutely put an End to the Life of Heaven in his Soul.

On the other Hand, it cannot be true that JESUS CHRIST is his Redeemer, and does deliver him from his fallen State, unleſs it be true, that JESUS CHRIST helps him to a new Birth of that Light and Spirit of GOD, which was extinguiſh'd by his Fall. For nothing could poſſibly be the Redemption, or Recovery of Man, but *Regeneration* alone. His Miſery was his having loſt the Life and Light of Heaven from his Soul, and therefore nothing in all the Univerſe of Nature, but a new Birth of that which he had loſt, could be his Deliverance from his fallen State.

And therefore if Angels after Angels had come down from Heaven to aſſure him, that GOD had no Anger at him, he would ſtill have been in the ſame *helpleſs State*; nay, had they told him, that GOD had Pity and Compaſſion towards him, he had yet been *unhelped*; becauſe in the Nature of the Thing, nothing could make ſo much as a Beginning of his Deliverance, but that which made a Beginning of a new Birth in him, and nothing could fully

effect his Recovery, but which perfectly finish'd the new Birth of all that heavenly Life which he had lost.

The Gospel tells us of a certain Man, that fell among Thieves, who stripp'd him, and wounded him, and left him half dead; that first a *Priest*, then a *Levite* coming that Way, both of them avoided the poor Man, by passing on the other Side.

Here it is plain, that this Priest and Levite left the poor Man in the *same helpless* State in which they found him. Let it now be supposed, that instead of going on the other Side of the Road, they had come up to him, and pour'd *Oil* and *Wine* into his Wounds, only in a *figurative* Sense of the Words, that is, that they had spoke such Words to him, Words so *soft*, so oily, and reviving, that in a just *Figure* of Speech, they might be called, a *pouring of Wine and Oil* into his Wounds. Now had they done this, must it not still be said, that the poor Man's Wounds and Nakedness were still left in their first *helpless* State? And all for this plain Reason, because the poor Man was naked, and wounded, not in a *figurative* Sense of the Words, but *really*, and *truly*, and therefore could have no Help, or Benefit, but from real Oil, and Wine really pour'd into his Wounds. And for the same

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plain Reaſon, the fallen Soul *really* dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, can have no Help but by a new Birth of the Light and Spirit of Heaven, *really* brought forth again in it. When *Adam* lay in his Death Wounds to the Kingdom of God, had the higheſt Order of *Archangels*, or *Seraphims* come by that way, they could only have done as the Prieſt and Levite did, go on the other Side; or if they had come up to him, and done all they could for him, it could only have been ſuch a *Good*, or *Relief* to him, as by a *Figure* of Speech might be ſo called.

For as *Adam* had extinguiſh'd the Light and Spirit of God in himſelf, ſo no one could be the *good Samaritan* to him, or pour that Wine and Oil into his Wounds, which they wanted, but he who was the *Author*, and *Source* of Light and Life to every Being that lives in Heaven.

One would wonder how any Perſons, that believe the great Myſtery of our Redemption, who adore the Depths of the Divine Goodneſs, in that the Son of God, the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity, became a Man himſelf, in order to make it *poſſible* for Man by a *Birth* from him, to enter again into the Kingdom of God, ſhould yet ſeek to, and contend for, not a *real*, but a figurative Senſe of a new Birth

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in JESUS CHRIST. Is there any Thing more inconsistent than this? Or can any Thing strike more directly at the Heart of the whole Nature of our Redemption? God became Man, took upon him a Birth from the fallen Nature. But why was this done? Or wherein lies the adorable Depth of this Mystery? How does all this manifest the Infinity of the Divine Love towards Man? It is because nothing less than this mysterious Incarnation (which astonishes Angels) could open a *Way*, or begin a *Possibility*, for fallen Man, to be *born again* from above, and made again a *Partaker* of the Divine Nature. It was because Man was become so dead to the Kingdom of Heaven, that there was no Help for him through all Nature. No Powers, no Abilities of the highest Order of Creatures, could kindle the least Spark of Life in him, or help him to the least Glimpse of that heavenly Light which he had lost. Now when all Nature and Creature stood round about *Adam* as unable to help him, as he was to help himself, and all of them *unable* to help him, for *this Reason*, because *that* which he had lost, was the *Life* and *Light* of Heaven; how glorious, how adorable is that mystery, which enables us to say, that when Man lay thus incapable of any Relief from all the *Powers* and *Possibilities* of Nature,

ture, that then the Son, the Word of God entered by a Birth into this fallen Nature, that by this myſterious Incarnation, all the fallen Nature might be *born again* of him according to the *Spirit*, in the *ſame Reality*, as they were born of *Adam* according to the *Fleſh?* Look at this Myſtery in this true Light, in this plain Senſe of Scripture, and then you muſt be forced to fall down before it, in Adoration of it. For all that is great and aſtoniſhing in the Goodneſs of God, all that is glorious and happy with Regard to Man, is manifeſtly contained in it.

But tell me, I pray, what becomes of all this, what is there left in any Part of this Myſtery, if this *new Birth*, for the Sake of which God became Man, is not really a new Birth in the Thing itſelf, is not as the Scripture affirms, a real Birth of the Son and Spirit of God in the Soul, but ſomething or other, this or that which the *Criticks* ſay, may be called a new Birth, by a certain Figure of Speech? Is not *this* to give up all our Redemption at once, and a turning all the Myſteries of our Salvation into mere empty, unmeaning Terms of Speech? He that ſhould deny the *Reality* of the Reſurrection, upon Pretence, that by the Rules of Criticiſm, it need not ſignify a real coming out of a State

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of Natural Death, might have more to say for himself both from Reason and Scripture, than he that denies the Reality of the new Birth in CHRIST JESUS. For this new Birth is not a *Part*, but the *Whole* of our Salvation. Every Thing in Religion from the Beginning to the End of Time, is only for the Sake of it. Nothing does us any Good, but either as it helps forward our Regeneration, or as it is a true Fruit, or Effect of it.

All the glad Tidings of the Gospel, all the Benefits of our Saviour, however variously exprest in Scripture, all center in this one Point, that He is become our Light, our Life, our Resurrection, our Holiness and Salvation; that we are in Him new Creatures, *created again* unto Righteousness, born again of Him, from above, of the Spirit of God. Every Thing in the Gospel, is for the Sake of this new Creature, this new Man in CHRIST JESUS, and nothing is regarded without it. What Excuse therefore can be made for that Learning, which, robbing us of the true Fruits of the Tree of Life, leaves us nothing to feed upon, but the dry Dust of Words?

I am the Vine, Ye are the Branches. Here CHRIST, our second *Adam*, uses this Similitude to teach us, that the new Birth that we are to have from Him is *real*, in the most

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ſtrict and literal Senſe of the Words, and that there is the ſame *Nearneſs* of Relation, betwixt Him and his true Diſciples, that there is betwixt the *Vine* and its Branches, that He does all that in us, and for us, which the Vine does to its Branches. Now the Life of the Vine muſt be really derived into the Branches, they cannot be Branches, till the Birth of the Vine is brought forth in them. And therefore as ſure as the Birth of the Vine muſt be brought forth in the Branches, ſo ſure is it, that we muſt be born again of our ſecond *Adam*. And that unleſs the Life of the Holy JESUS be in us by a Birth from Him, we are as dead to Him, and the Kingdom of God, as the Branch is dead to the Vine, from which it is broken off.

Again our Bleſſed Saviour ſaith, *Without me ye can do Nothing*. The Queſtion is, when, or how a Man may be ſaid to be *without* CHRIST? Conſider again the Vine and its Branches; A Branch can then only be ſaid to be without its Vine, when the Vegetable Life of the Vine is no longer *in it*. This is the only Senſe, in which we can be ſaid to be *without* CHRIST; when He is no longer in us, as a Principle of a heavenly Life, we are then without Him, and ſo *can do Nothing*, that is, Nothing that is good or holy. A CHRIST not *in us*, is the

ſame Thing as a CHRIST *not ours*. If we are only *ſo far* with Chriſt, as to own and receive the Hiſtory of his Birth, Perſon and Character, if this is all that we have of Him, we are as much *without* Him, as much left to ourſelves, as little help'd by Him, as thoſe evil Spirits which cry'd out, *We know Thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God.* For thoſe evil Spirits, and all the fallen Angels, are totally *without* CHRIST, have no Benefit from Him, for this *one* and *only* Reaſon, becauſe CHRIST is not *in Them*; Nothing of the Son of GOD is *generated*, or *born* in them. Therefore every Son of *Adam*, that has not *ſomething* of the Son of God *generated*, or born *within* Him, is as much *without Chriſt*, as deſtitute of all Help from Him, as thoſe evil Spirits who could only make an *outward Confeſſion* of Him.

It is the Language of Scripture, that *Chriſt in us* is our Hope of Glory; that CHRIST form'd in us, living, growing, and raiſing his own Life and Spirit in us, is our only Salvation. And indeed all this is plain from the Nature of the Thing, for ſince the *Serpent*, *Sin*, *Death* and *Hell*, are all eſſentially *within* us, the very *Growth* of our Nature, muſt not our Redemption be equally *inward*, an inward *eſſential Death* to this State of our Souls, and

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an inward Growth of a contrary Life within us? If *Adam* was only an *outward Perſon*, if his whole Nature was not our Nature, born in us, and deriv'd *from Him into us*, it would be Nonſenſe to ſay, that his Fall is our Fall. So in like manner, if CHRIST, our ſecond *Adam*, was only an *outward* Perſon, if He entered not as *deeply* into our Nature as the firſt *Adam* does, if we have not *as really* from Him a new inward, ſpiritual Man, as we have outward Fleſh and Blood from *Adam*, What Ground could there be to ſay, that our Righteouſneſs is from Him, as our Sin is from *Adam?*

Let no one here think to charge me with Diſregard to the Holy JESUS, who was born of the *Virgin Mary*, or with ſetting up an *inward* Saviour in Oppoſition to that outward CHRIST, whoſe Hiſtory is recorded in the Goſpel. No: It is with the utmoſt Fulneſs of Faith and Aſſurance, that I aſcribe all our Redemption to that bleſſed and myſterious Perſon, that was then born of the *Virgin Mary*, and will aſſert no inward Redemption but what wholly proceeds from, and is effected by that Life-giving Redeemer, who dy'd on the Croſs for our Redemption.

Was I to ſay, that a *Plant*, or *Vegetable* muſt have the Sun *within* it, muſt have the Life,

Life, Light and Virtues of the Sun incorporated *in it*, that it has no Benefit from the Sun, till the Sun is thus *inwardly* forming, generating, quickening, and raising up a Life of the Sun's Virtues in it, would this be setting up an *inward* Sun, in Opposition to the outward one? Could any Thing be more ridiculous than such a Charge? For is not all that is here said of an inward Sun in the Vegetable, so much said of a Power and Virtue derived from the Sun in the Firmament? So in like manner, all that is said of an inward Christ, inwardly form'd, and generated in the Root of the Soul, is only so much said of an *inward Life*, brought forth by the *Power* and *Efficacy* of that Blessed CHRIST, that was born of the *Virgin Mary*.

CHAP. II.

Discovering the true Way of turning to GOD, *and of finding the Kingdom of Heaven, the Riches of Eternity in our Souls.*

THOU hast seen, dear Reader, the Nature, and Necessity of *Regeneration*, be persuaded therefore fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy Mind this most certain Truth,

Truth, that all our Salvation consists in the *Manifestation of the Nature, Life, and Spirit of Jesus Christ in our inward new Man.* This alone is Christian Redemption, this alone delivers from the Guilt and Power of Sin, this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first Life of GOD in the Soul of Man. Every Thing besides this, is *Self*, is *Fiction*, is *Propriety*, is *own Will*, and however coloured, is only thy *old Man, with all his Deeds.* Enter therefore with all thy Heart into this Truth, let thy Eye be always upon it, do every Thing in View of it, try every Thing by the Truth of it, love Nothing but for the Sake of it. Whereever thou goest, whatever thou dost at Home, or Abroad, in the Field or at Church, do all in a Desire of Union with CHRIST, in imitation of his Tempers and Inclinations, and look upon all as Nothing, but that which exercises, and encreases the Spirit, and Life of CHRIST in thy Soul. From Morning to Night keep JESUS in thy Heart, long for Nothing, desire Nothing, hope for Nothing, but to have all that is within Thee, changed into the Spirit and Temper of the Holy JESUS. Let this be thy *Christianity*, thy *Church*, and thy *Religion.* For this new Birth in CHRIST thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do every thing that thou wantest to have

done in Thee, it will dry up all the Springs of Vice, ſtop all the Workings of Evil in thy Nature, it will bring all that is Good into Thee, it will open all the Goſpel within Thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of GOD. This longing Deſire of thy Heart to be *one* with CHRIST will ſoon put a Stop to all the Vanity of thy Life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy Heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from GOD and returns to GOD; thou wilt ſoon be, as it were, tied and bound in the Chains of all holy Affections and Deſires, thy *Mouth* will have a *Watch* ſet upon it, thy *Ears* would willingly hear nothing that does not tend to GOD, nor thy Eyes be open, but to ſee, and find Occaſions of doing Good. In a word, when this Faith has got both thy *Head* and thy *Heart*, it will then be with thee, as it was with the *Merchant* who found a *Pearl of great Price*, it will make thee gladly to *ſell all that thou haſt, and buy it*. For all that had ſeized and poſſeſſed the Heart of any Man, whatever the *Merchant* of this World had got together, whether of Riches, Power, Honour, Learning, or Reputation, loſes all its Value, is counted but as *Dung*, and willingly parted with, as ſoon as this glorious Pearl, the new Birth in CHRIST JESUS, is diſcovered and found by him.

him. This therefore may ſerve as a *Touch-ſtone*, whereby every one may try the Truth of his State; if the old Man is ſtill a *Merchant* within thee, trading in all ſorts of worldly Honour, Power, or Learning, if the Wiſdom of this World is not Fooliſhneſs to thee, if earthly Intereſts, and ſenſual Pleaſures are ſtill the Deſire of thy Heart, and only covered under a *Form* of Godlineſs, a *Cloke* of Creeds, Obſervances and Inſtitutions of Religion, thou mayſt be aſſured, that the *Pearl of great Price* is not yet found by thee. For where CHRIST is born, or his Spirit riſes up in the Soul, *there all Self* is denied, and obliged to turn out; *there* all carnal Wiſdom, Arts of Advancement, with every Pride and Glory of this Life, are as ſo many *heathen Idols* all willingly renounced, and the Man is not only content, but rejoices to ſay, that *his Kingdom is not of this World.*

But thou wilt perhaps ſay, how ſhall this great Work, the Birth of CHRIST, be effected in me? It might rather be ſaid, ſince CHRIST has an infinite Power, and alſo an infinite Deſire to ſave Mankind, how can any one miſs of this Salvation, but through his *own unwillingneſs* to be ſaved by Him? Conſider, how was it, that the *Lame* and *Blind*, the *Lunatick* and *Leper*, the *Publican* and *Sinner*,

ner, found CHRIST to be their Saviour, and to do *all That* for them, which they wanted to be done to them? It was becauſe they had a *real Deſire* of having *That*, which they aſked for, and therefore in true *Faith* and *Prayer* applied to CHRIST, that his Spirit and Power might enter into them, and heal That which they wanted, and deſired to be healed in them. Every one of theſe ſaid in *Faith and Deſire*, *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canſt make me whole.* And the Anſwer was always this, *According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto Thee!* This is CHRIST's Anſwer *now*, and thus it is done to every one of us at this Day, as *our Faith is, ſo is it done unto us.* And here lies the whole Reaſon of our falling ſhort of the Salvation of CHRIST, it is becauſe we have *no Will* to it.

But you will ſay, Do not all Chriſtians deſire to have CHRIST to be their Saviour? Yes. But here is the Deceit; all would have CHRIST to be their Saviour in the *next World*, and to help them into Heaven when they die, by his Power, and Merits with GOD. But this is not *willing* CHRIST to be thy Saviour; for his Salvation, if it is had, muſt be had in this World, if He ſaves Thee, it muſt be done in this Life, by changing and altering *all that is within Thee*, by helping thee to a new Heart,

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as He helped the Blind to see, the Lame to walk, and the Dumb to speak. For to have Salvation from CHRIST, is nothing else but to be made like unto Him; it is to have his Humility and Meekness, his Mortification and Self-denial, his Renunciation of the Spirit, Wisdom, and Honours of this World, his Love of GOD, his Desire of doing GOD's Will, and seeking only his Honour. To have these Tempers formed and begotten in thy Heart, is to have Salvation from CHRIST; but if thou *willest not* to have these Tempers brought forth in thee, if thy Faith and Desire does not seek, and cry to CHRIST for them in the *same Reality*, as the Lame asked to walk, and the Blind to see, then thou must be said to be *unwilling* to have CHRIST to be thy Saviour.

Again, Consider, how was it, that the carnal *Jew*, the deep-read *Scribe*, the learned *Rabbi*, the religious *Pharisee*, not only did not receive, but *crucified* their Saviour? It was because they *willed*, and *desired* no such Saviour as He was, no such *inward Salvation* as He offered to them. They desired no change of their own Nature, no inward Destruction of their own natural Tempers, no Deliverance from the Love of themselves, and the Enjoyments of their Passions; they liked their

State, the Gratifications of their Old Man, their *long Robes*, their *broad Philacteries*, and *Greetings* in the Markets. They wanted not to have their *Pride* and *Self-love* dethroned, their Covetousness, and Sensuality to be subdued by a new Nature from Heaven derived into them. Their only Desire was the Success of *Judaism*, to have an *outward* Saviour, a *temporal* Prince, that should establish their *Law* and Ceremonies over all the Earth. And therefore they crucified their dear Redeemer, and would have none of his Salvation, because it all consisted in a Change of their Nature, in a *new Birth* from above, and a Kingdom of Heaven to be opened *within* them by the Spirit of GOD.

Oh Christendom, look not only at the *old Jews*, but see thyself in this Glass. For at this Day, (Oh sad Truth to be told!) at this Day, a CHRIST *within* us, an *inward* Saviour raising a *Birth* of his own Nature, Life, and Spirit within us, is rejected as gross *Enthusiasm*, the learned *Rabbi's* take Counsel against it. The Propagation of *Popery*, the Propagation of *Protestantism*, the Success of some *particular* Church, is the *Salvation* which Priests and People are chiefly concerned about.

But to return: It is manifest, that no one can fail of the Benefit of CHRIST's Salvation,

tion, but through an *unwillingneſs* to have it; and from the ſame Spirit and Tempers which made the *Jews* unwilling to receive it. But if thou wouldſt ſtill farther know, how this great Work, the *Birth* of CHRIST, is to be effected in thee, then let this joyful Truth be told thee, that this great Work is *already* begun in every one of us. For this holy JESUS, that is to be formed in thee, that is to be the Saviour and new Life of thy Soul, that is to raiſe thee out of the Darkneſs of Death into the Light of Life, and give thee Power to become a Son of GOD, is already *within* thee, living, ſtirring, calling, knocking at the Door of thy Heart, and wanting nothing but thy own *Faith* and *good Will*, to have as real a Birth and Form in thee, as He had in the Virgin *Mary*. For the eternal *Word*, or Son of GOD, did not then firſt begin to be the Saviour of the World, when He was Born in *Bethlehem* of *Judea*; but that Word which became Man in the Virgin *Mary*, did, from the Beginning of the World, enter as a *Word* of Life, a *Seed* of Salvation, into the firſt Father of Mankind, was inſpoken into him, as an ingrafted Word, under the Name and Character of a *Bruiſer of the Serpent's Head*. Hence it is, that CHRIST ſaid to his Diſciples, *the Kingdom of God is within you*; that

is, the divine Nature is within you, given unto your first Father, into the Light of his Life, and from him, rising up in the Life of every Son of *Adam*. Hence also the holy JESUS is said to be the *Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.* Not as He was born at *Bethlehem*, not as He had an human Form upon Earth, in these Respects he could not be said to have been the Light of every Man that cometh into the World. But as He was that *eternal Word*, by which all Things were created, which was the *Life* and *Light* of all Things, and which had as a *second* Creator entered again into fallen Man, as a Bruiser of the Serpent, in this respect it was truly said of our LORD, when on Earth, that *He was that Light which lighteth every Man, that cometh into the World.* For He was really and truly all this, as He was the *Immanuel*, the GOD *with us*, given unto *Adam*, and in him to all his Offspring. See here the Beginning and glorious Extent of the *Catholick Church* of CHRIST, it takes in all the World. It is GOD's unlimited, universal Mercy to all Mankind; and every human Creature, as sure as he is born of *Adam*, has a Birth of the Bruiser of the Serpent within him, and so is infallibly in Covenant with GOD through JESUS CHRIST. Hence also

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it is, that the Holy JESUS is appointed to be Judge of all the World, it is becauſe all Mankind, all Nations and Languages have in him, and through him been put into Covenant with GOD, and made capable of reſiſting the Evil of their fallen Nature.

When our bleſſed LORD converſed with the Woman at *Jacob*'s Well, He ſaid unto her, *If thou kneweſt the Gift of* GOD, and *who it is, that talketh with thee, thou wouldeſt have aſked of Him, and He would have given Thee living Water.* How happy (may any one well ſay) was this Woman of *Samaria* to ſtand ſo near this *Gift of* GOD, from whom ſhe might have had living Water, had ſhe but vouchſafed to have aſked for it! But, dear Chriſtian, this Happineſs is thine; for this Holy Jeſus, *the Gift of* GOD, firſt given into *Adam*, and in him to all that are deſcended from him, is the *Gift of* GOD *to* Thee, as ſure as thou art born of *Adam*; nay, haſt thou never yet owned him, art thou wandered from him, as far as the Prodigal Son from his Father's Houſe, yet is he ſtill with Thee, he is the Gift of GOD to Thee, and if thou wilt turn to Him, and aſk of Him, he has living Water for Thee.

Poor Sinner! conſider the Treaſure thou haſt within Thee, the Saviour of the World,

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the eternal Word of GOD lies hid in Thee, as a Spark of the Divine Nature, which is to overcome Sin and Death, and Hell within Thee, and generate the Life of Heaven again in thy Soul. Turn to thy Heart, and thy Heart will find its Saviour, its GOD within itself. Thou seest, heareſt, and feeleſt nothing of GOD, becauſe thou ſeekeſt for Him *abroad* with thy outward Eyes, thou ſeekeſt for Him in Books, in Controverſies, in the Church, and outward Exerciſes, but *there* thou wilt not find Him, till thou haſt *firſt* found Him in thy Heart. Seek for Him in thy Heart, and thou wilt never ſeek in vain, for there He dwelleth, there is the Seat of his Light and Holy Spirit.

For this turning to the Light and Spirit of GOD within Thee, is thy *only true* turning unto GOD, there is no other Way of finding Him, but in that Place where he dwelleth in Thee. For though GOD be every where preſent, yet He is only preſent to Thee in the deepeſt, and moſt central Part of thy Soul. Thy natural *Senſes* cannot poſſeſs GOD, or unite Thee to Him, nay thy inward Faculties of *Underſtanding*, *Will* and *Memory*, can only reach after GOD, but cannot be the *Place* of his Habitation in Thee. But there is a *Root*, or *Depth* in Thee, from whence all

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these Faculties come forth, as Lines from a *Center*, or as Branches from the Body of the Tree. This Depth is called the *Center*, the *Fund* or *Bottom* of the Soul. This Depth is the *Unity*, the *Eternity*, I had almost said, the *Infinity* of thy Soul, for it is so infinite, that nothing can satisfy it, or give it any Rest, but the Infinity of GOD. In this *Depth* of the Soul, the Holy Trinity brought forth its own living Image in the first created Man, bearing in Himself a living Representation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and this was his Dwelling in GOD and GOD in him. This was the Kingdom of GOD *within* Him, and made Paradise *without* Him. But the Day that *Adam* did eat of the forbidden earthly Tree, in that Day he absolutely died to this Kingdom of GOD *within Him*. This *Depth*, or *Center* of his Soul having lost its GOD, was shut up in Death and Darkness, and became a Prisoner in an earthly Animal, that only excelled its Brethren, the Beasts, in an upright Form, and serpentine Subtlety. Thus ended the Fall of Man. But from that Moment that the GOD of Mercy inspoke into *Adam* the Bruiser of the Serpent, from that Moment all the Riches and Treasures of the Divine Nature came again into Man, as a *Seed* of Salvation sown into the *Center* of the Soul, and only

only lieth hidden there in every Man, till he desires to rise from his fallen Sate, and to be born again from above.

Awake then, thou that Sleepest, and CHRIST, who from all Eternity hath been espoused to thy Soul, shall give Thee Light. Begin to search and dig in thine own Field for this *Pearl of Eternity*, that lieth hidden in it; it cannot cost Thee too much, nor canst thou buy it dear, for it is *All*, and when thou hast found it, thou wilt know, that all which thou hast sold, or given away for it, is as meer a Nothing, as a Bubble upon the Water.

But if thou turnest from this heavenly Pearl, or trampleſt it under thy Feet, for the sake of being Rich, or Great, either in Church or State, if Death finds Thee in *this Success*, thou canst not then say, that though the *Pearl* is lost, yet *something* has been gain'd instead of it. For in that parting Moment, the *Things*, and the *Sounds* of this World, will be exactly alike; to have had an *Estate*, or only to have *heard* of it, to have lived at *Lambeth* twenty Years, or only to have twenty Times *passed by* the Palace, will be the *same Good*, or the same *Nothing* to Thee.

But I will now shew a little more distinctly, what this *Pearl of Eternity* is. *First*, It

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is the *Light* and *Spirit* of God within Thee, which has hitherto done Thee but little Good, becauſe all the Deſire of thy Heart has been after the Light, and Spirit of this World. Thy Reaſon, and Senſes, thy Heart and Paſſions, have turn'd all their Attention to the poor Concerns of this Life, and therefore thou art a Stranger to this Principle of Heaven, this Riches of Eternity within Thee. For as God is not, cannot be truly found by any Worſhippers, but thoſe who worſhip Him in *Spirit* and in *Truth*, ſo this Light and Spirit, though always within us, is not, cannot be found, felt, or enjoy'd, but by thoſe, whoſe whole Spirit is turned to it.

When Man firſt came into Being, and ſtood before God as his own Image and Likeneſs, this *Light* and *Spirit* of God was as *natural* to him, as truly the Light of his Nature, as the *Light and Air* of this World is natural to the Creatures that have their Birth in it. But when Man, not content with the Food of Eternity, did eat of the earthly Tree, this Light and Spirit of Heaven was no more *natural* to him, no more roſe up as a Birth of his Nature, but inſtead thereof, he was left ſolely to the Light and Spirit of this World. And this is *that Death*, which God told

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Adam, he ſhould ſurely die, in the Day that he ſhould eat of the forbidden Tree.

But the Goodneſs of God would not leave Man in this Condition; a Redemption from it was immediately granted, and the Bruiſer of the Serpent brought the Light and Spirit of Heaven *once more* into the human Nature. Not as it was in its firſt State, when Man was in Paradiſe, but as a *Treaſure hidden* in the Center of our Souls, which ſhould diſcover, and open itſelf by Degrees, in ſuch Proportion, as the *Faith* and *Deſires* of our Hearts were turned to it. This Light and Spirit of God thus freely reſtored again to the Soul, and lying in it as a *ſecret Source* of Heaven, is called *Grace*, *Free Grace*, or the *Supernatural* Gift, or Power, of God in the Soul, becauſe it was ſomething, that the Natural Powers of the Soul could no more obtain. Hence it is, that in the greateſt Truth, and higheſt Reality, every *ſtirring* of the Soul, every *Tendency* of the Heart towards God and Goodneſs, is *juſtly* and *neceſſarily* aſcribed to the *Holy Spirit*, or the *Grace* of God. It is becauſe this *firſt Seed* of Life, which is ſown into the Soul, as the *Gift* or *Grace* of God to fallen Man, is itſelf the *Light* and *Spirit* of God, and therefore every *Stiring*, or *Opening* of this Seed of Life, every awakened Thought

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or Desire that arises from it, must be called the *Moving*, or the *Quickning* of the Spirit of God; and therefore that new Man which arises from it, must of all Necessity be said to be *solely the Work and Operation of* God. Hence also we have an easy and plain Declaration of the true Meaning, solid Sense, and certain Truth, of all those Scriptures, which speak of the *Inspiration* of God, the Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, the Power of the *Divine Light*, as the *sole* and *necessary* Agents in the Renewal and Sanctification of our Souls, and also as being Things *common* to all Men. It is because this *Seed* of Life, or Bruiser of the Serpent is *common* to all Men, and has in all Men a *Degree* of Life, which is in itself so much of the *Inspiration*, or Life of God, the *Spirit* of God, the *Light* of God, which is in every Soul, and is its Power of becoming born again of God. Hence also it is, that all Men are exhorted not to *quench*, or *resist*, or *grieve* the Spirit, that is, this *Seed of the Spirit and Light of* God that is in *all* Men, as the only Source of Good. Again, *the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh.* By the Flesh, and its Lustings, are meant the *mere human Nature*, or the *natural Man*, as He is by the Fall; by the *Spirit* is meant the *Bruiser of the Serpent*, that Seed of

the Light and Spirit of GOD, which lieth as a Treasure hid in the Soul, in order to bring forth the Life, that was lost in *Adam*. Now as the Flesh hath its Life, its Lustings, whence all sorts of Evil are truly said to be inspired, quickned, and stirred up in us; so the Spirit being a *Living* Principle *within us*, has its *Inspiration*, its *Breathing*, its *Moving*, its *Quickning*, from which alone the Divine Life, or the Angel that died in *Adam*, can be born in us.

When this *Seed* of the Spirit, *common* to all Men, is not resisted, grieved, and quenched, but its *Inspirations* and *Motions* suffered to grow and increase in us, to unite with GOD; and get Power over all the Lusts of the Flesh, then we are born again, the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of JESUS CHRIST are opened in our Souls, the Kingdom of GOD is come, and is found within us. On the other Hand, when the Flesh, or the *Natural* Man hath resisted and quenched this Spirit or Seed of Life within us; then the Works of the Flesh, Adultery, Fornication, Murders, Lying, Hatred, Envy, Wrath, Pride, Foolishness, worldly Wisdom, carnal Prudence, false Religion, hypocritical Holiness, and serpentine Subtlety, have set up their Kingdom within us.

See here in short the State of Man as redeemed. He has a *Spark* of the Light and Spirit of God, as a *Supernatural Gift* of God given into the Birth of his Soul, to bring forth by Degrees a *New Birth* of that Life, which was lost in Paradise. This Holy Spark of the Divine Nature within Him, has a natural, strong and almost infinite Tendency, or Reaching after that eternal Light and Spirit of God, from whence it came forth. It came forth from God, it came *out* of God, it *partaketh* of the Divine Nature, and therefore it is always in a State of Tendency and Return to God. And all this is called the *Breathing*, the *Moving*, the *Quickning*, of the Holy Spirit within us, which are so many Operations of this Spark of Life tending towards God. On the other Hand, The Diety as considered in itself, and *without* the Soul of Man, has an *infinite*, *unchangeable* Tendency of Love, and Desire towards the Soul of Man, to unite, and communicate its own Riches and Glories to it, just as the Spirit of the *Air without* Man, unites, and communicates its Riches and Virtues to the Spirit of the Air, that is *within* Man. This Love, or Desire of God towards the Soul of Man is so great, that He gave his only begotten Son, the Brightness of his Glory, to take the human

Nature upon Him, in its fallen State, that by this myſterious Union of GOD and Man, all the Enemies of the Soul of Man might be overcome, and every human Creature might have a Power of being born again according to that Image of God, in which he was firſt created. The Goſpel is the Hiſtory of this Love of GOD to Man. Inwardly he has a *Seed* of the Divine Life given into the Birth of his Soul, a Seed that has all the *Riches of Eternity* in it, and is always wanting to come to the Birth in him, and be alive in GOD. Outwardly he has JESUS-CHRIST, who as a *Sun* of Righteouſneſs, is always caſting forth his enlivening Beams on this *inward Seed*, to kindle and call it forth to the Birth, doing that to this Seed of Heaven in Man, which the Sun in the Firmament is always doing to the vegetable Seeds in the Earth.

Conſider this Matter in the following Similitude. A *Grain* of Wheat has the *Air* and *Light* of this World incloſed, or incorporated in it: This is the Myſtery of its Life, this is its Power of Growing, by this it has a ſtrong continual Tendency of uniting again with that *Ocean* of Light and Air, from whence it came forth, and ſo it helps to kindle its own Vegetable Life.

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On the other Hand, That great *Ocean* of Light and Air, having its own *Offspring* hidden in the Heart of the Grain, has a perpetual ſtrong Tendency to unite, and communicate, with it again. From this Deſire of Union on *both Sides*, the Vegetable Life ariſes, and all the Virtues and Powers contained in it.

But here let it be well obſerved, that this Deſire on both Sides cannot have its Effect, till the *Huſk* and groſs Part of the Grain falls into a State of Corruption and Death, till this begins, the Myſtery of Life hidden in it, cannot come forth. The Application here may be left to the Reader. I ſhall only obſerve, that we may here ſee the true Ground, and abſolute Neceſſity of that dying to ourſelves, and to the World, to which our Bleſſed Lord ſo conſtantly calls all his followers. An univerſal Self-Denial, a perpetual Mortification of the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not a Thing impoſed upon us by the *mere Will* of God, is not required as a *Puniſhment*, is not an invention of dull and *monkiſh* Spirits, but has its *Ground* and *Reaſon* in the Nature of the Thing, and is as abſolutely neceſſary to make Way for the New Birth, as the Death of the *Huſk*, and groſs Part of the Grain, is neceſſary to make Way for its Vegetable Life.

But *Secondly* this *Pearl of Eternity* is the *Wisdom* and *Love* of GOD within Thee. In this Pearl of thy Serpent Bruiser, all the Holy Nature, Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of CHRIST lie as in a Seed in the Center of thy Soul, and divine Wisdom and heavenly Love will grow up in Thee, if thou giveſt but true Attention to GOD preſent in thy Soul. On the other Hand, There is hidden alſo in the Depth of thy Nature the *Root*, or *Poſſibility* of all the helliſh Nature, Spirit and Tempers of the fallen Angels. For Heaven and Hell have each of them their *Foundation* within us, they come not into us from *without*, but ſpring up in us, according as our *Will* and *Heart* is turned either to the Light of GOD, or the Kingdom of Darkneſs. But when this Life, which is in the midſt of theſe two Eternities, is at an End, either an Angel, or a Devil will be found to have a *Birth* in us.

Thou needeſt not therefore run here, or there, *ſaying where is Chriſt? Thou needeſt not ſay, Who ſhall aſcend into Heaven, that is, to bring down Chriſt from above?* or who ſhall deſcend into the Deep to bring up Chriſt from the Dead? for behold the *Word*, which is the Wiſdom of God, is in thy Heart, it is there as a Bruiſer of thy Serpent, as a Light unto thy Feet and Lanthorn unto thy Paths.

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It is there as an *Holy Oil*, to ſoften and overcome the wrathful fiery Properties of thy Nature, and change them into the humble Meekneſs of Light and Love. It is there as a *ſpeaking Word* of GOD in thy Soul; and as ſoon as thou art ready to hear, this eternal ſpeaking Word will ſpeak Wiſdom and Love in thy inward Parts, and bring forth the Birth of CHRIST, with all his Holy Nature, Spirit and Tempers, within Thee. Hence it was, (that is, from this Principle of Heaven, or CHRIST in the Soul) hence I ſay it was, that ſo many eminent Spirits, Partakers of a divine Life, have appeared in ſo many Parts of the Heathen World. Glorious Names, Sons of Wiſdom, that ſhone, as Lights hung out by GOD, in the midſt of idolatrous Darkneſs. Theſe were the Apoſtles of a *Chriſt within*, that were awakened and commiſſioned by the *inward Bruiſer* of the Serpent, to call Mankind from the blind Purſuits of Fleſh and Blood, to know themſelves, the Dignity of their Nature, the Immortality of their Souls, and the Neceſſity of Virtue to avoid eternal Shame and Miſery. Theſe *Apoſtles*, though they had not the *Law*, or *written* Goſpel to urge upon their Hearers, yet having turned to GOD, they found, and preached the Goſpel, that was written in their Hearts.

Hence one of them could ſay this Divine Truth, *viz.* that *ſuch only are Prieſts and Prophets, who have God in themſelves.* Hence alſo it is, that in the Chriſtian Church, there hath been in all Ages, amongſt the moſt illiterate, both Men and Women, who have attained to a deep Underſtanding of the myſteries of the Wiſdom and Love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. And what wonder? Since it is not Art or Science, for Skill in Grammar or Logic, but the Opening of the Divine Life in the Soul, that can give true Underſtanding of the Things of GOD. This Life of GOD in the Soul, which for its ſmallneſs at firſt, and Capacity for great Growth, is by our LORD compared to a Grain of Muſtard Seed, may be, and too generally is ſuppreſſed, and kept under, either by worldly Cares, or Pleaſures, by vain Learning, Senſuality, or Ambition. And all this while, whatever Church, or Profeſſion any Man is of, he is a mere *Natural* Man, *unregenerate, unenlightened* by the Spirit of GOD, becauſe this Seed of Heaven is choak'd, and not ſuffered to grow up in him. And therefore his *Religion* is no more from Heaven, than his *fine Breeding*; his *Cares* have no more Goodneſs in them, than his *Pleaſures*; his *Love* is worth no more than his *Hatred*; his Zeal for

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this, or againſt that Form of Religion, has only the Nature of any other worldly Contention in it. And thus it is, and muſt be with every mere natural Man, whatever Appearances he may put on, he may, if he pleaſes, know himſelf to be the Slave, and Machine of his own corrupt Tempers and Inclinations; to be enlightened, inſpired, quickned and animated by Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, which is the only Life, and Spirit of the mere natural Man, whether he be *Heathen*, *Jew* or *Chriſtian*.

On the other Hand, Where-ever this Seed of Heaven is ſuffered to take Root, to get Life and Breath in the Soul, whether it be in Man, or Woman, young or old, there this new born inward Man is juſtly ſaid to be *inſpired, enlightened and moved* by the Spirit of God, becauſe his whole Birth and Life is a Birth from above, of the Light and Spirit of God, and therefore all that is in him, hath the Nature, Spirit, and Tempers of Heaven in it. As this regenerate Life grows up in any Man, ſo there grows up a true and real Knowledge of the whole Myſtery of Godlineſs in himſelf. All that the Goſpel teaches of Sin and Grace, of Life and Death, of Heaven and Hell, of the New and Old Man, of the Light and Spirit of God, are Things not got

by *Hearſay*, but inwardly known, felt and experienced in the Growth of his own new born Life. He has then an *Unction* from above which teacheth him all Things, a Spirit that *knoweth what it ought to pray for*, a Spirit that *prays without ceaſing*, that is riſen with CHRIST from the dead, and has all its Converſation in Heaven, a Spirit that hath *Groans and Sighs that cannot be uttered*, that travaileth and groaneth with the whole Creation, to be delivered from Vanity, and have its glorious Liberty in that GOD, from whom it came forth.

Again, *Thirdly*, this *Pearl* of Eternity, is the *Church*, or *Temple* of GOD *within Thee*, the conſecrated Place of Divine Worſhip, where alone, thou canſt worſhip GOD in *Spirit, and in Truth*. *In Spirit*, becauſe thy Spirit is that alone in Thee, which can unite, and cleave unto GOD, and receive the Workings of his Divine Spirit upon Thee. *In Truth*, becauſe this *Adoration* in Spirit, is that *Truth* and *Reality*, of which all outward *Forms* and *Rites*, though inſtituted by GOD, are only the *Figure* for a Time, but this Worſhip is Eternal. Accuſtom thyſelf to the Holy Service of this inward Temple. In the midſt of it is the Fountain of Living Water, of which thou mayſt drink, and live for ever. There

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the Myſteries of thy Redemption are celebrated, or rather opened in Life and Power. There the Supper of the Lamb is kept; the *Bread that came down from Heaven, that giveth Life to the World*, is thy true Nouriſhment: all is done, and known in real Experience, in a living Senſibility of the work of GOD on the Soul. There the Birth, the Life, the Sufferings, the Death, the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of CHRIST, are not merely remembered, but inwardly found, and enjoyed as the real States of thy Soul, which has followed CHRIST in the Regeneration. When once thou art well grounded in this *inward Worſhip*, thou wilt have learnt to live unto GOD *above Time*, and *Place*. For every Day will be *Sunday* to thee, and where-ever thou goeſt, thou wilt have a *Prieſt*, a *Church*, and an *Altar* along with Thee. For when GOD has all that He ſhould have of thy Heart, when renouncing the Will, Judgment, Tempers and Inclinations of thy *old Man*, thou art wholly given up to the Obedience of the Light and Spirit of GOD within Thee, to *Will* only in his Will, to *Love* only in his Love, to be *Wiſe* only in his Wiſdom, then it is, that every Thing thou doſt, is as a Song of Praiſe, and the common Buſineſs of thy

Life

Life is a conforming to God's Will on Earth, as Angels do in Heaven.

Fourthly, and *Laſtly*, This *Pearl* of Eternity is the *Peace* and *Joy* of God within Thee, but can only be found by the Manifeſtation of the Life and Power of Jesus Christ in thy Soul. But Christ cannot be thy Power and thy Life, till in Obedience to his Call, *thou denieſt thyſelf, takeſt up thy daily Croſs, and followeſt Him*, in the Regeneration. This is peremptory, it admits of no Reſerve, or Evaſion, it is the one Way to Christ and Eternal Life. But be where thou wilt, either *here*, or at *Rome*, or *Geneva*, if *Self* is undenied, if thou liveſt to thine *own Will*, to the Pleaſures of thy natural Luſt and Appetites, Senſes and Paſſions, and in Conformity to the vain Cuſtoms, and Spirit of this World, thou art dead whilſt thou liveſt, the Seed of the Woman is crucified within Thee, Christ can profit thee Nothing, thou art a Stranger to all that is holy and heavenly within Thee, and utterly incapable of finding the *Peace* and *Joy* of God in thy Soul. And thus thou art *Poor*, and *Blind*, and *Naked*, and *Empty*, and liveſt a miſerable Life in the Vanity of Time; whilſt all the Riches of Eternity, the Light and Spirit, the Wiſdom and Love, the Peace and Joy of God are within Thee. And thus

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it will always be with Thee, there is no Remedy, go where thou wilt, do what thou wilt, all is shut up, there is no open Door of Salvation, no Awakening out of the Sleep of Sin, no Deliverance from the Power of thy corrupt Nature, no Overcoming of the World, no Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, no Joy of the New Birth from above, till dying to thy Self and the World, thou turnest to the Light, and Spirit, and Power of GOD in thy Soul. All is fruitless, and insignificant, all the Means of thy Redemption are at a Stand, all outward Forms are but a dead Formality, till this Fountain of Living Water is found within Thee.

But thou wilt perhaps say, How shall I discover this Riches of Eternity, this Light, and Spirit, and Wisdom, and Peace of GOD, treasured up within me? Thy *first Thought* of Repentance, or *Desire* of turning to GOD, is thy *first Discovery* of this Light and Spirit of GOD within Thee. It is the Voice and Language of the *Word* of GOD within Thee, though thou knowest it not. It is the Bruiser of thy Serpent's Head, thy dear *Immanuel*, who is beginning to preach *within* Thee, that same which He first preached in publick, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* When therefore but the smallest

Instinct

Inſtinct or Deſire of thy Heart calleth Thee towards GOD, and a newneſs of Life, give it Time and Leave to ſpeak; and take care thou refuſe not Him that ſpeaketh. For it is not an Angel from Heaven that ſpeaketh to Thee, but it is the eternal *ſpeaking Word* of GOD in thy Heart, that Word which at firſt created Thee, is thus beginning to create Thee a *ſecond Time* unto Righteouſneſs, that a new Man may be formed again in Thee in the Image and Likeneſs of GOD. But above all Things, beware of taking this *Deſire* of Repentance, to be the Effect of thy own Natural *Senſe* and *Reaſon*, for in ſo doing thou looſeſt the *Key* of all the Heavenly Treaſure that is in Thee, thou ſhutteſt the Door againſt GOD, turneſt away from Him, and thy Repentance (if thou haſt any) will be only a vain, unprofitable Work of thy own Hands, that will do Thee no more Good, than a *Well* that is without Water. But if thou takeſt this *awakened Deſire* of turning to GOD, to be, as in Truth it is, the coming of CHRIST in thy Soul, the *Working*, *Redeeming* Power of the Light and Spirit of the Holy JESUS within Thee, if thou doſt reverence and adhere to it, as ſuch, this *Faith will ſave Thee*, *will make Thee whole*; and by thus believing in CHRIST, though thou wert dead, yet ſhall thou live.

Now

Now all dependeth upon thy right Submiſſion and Obedience to this ſpeaking of God in thy Soul. Stop therefore all Self-activity, liſten not to the Suggeſtions of thy own Reaſon, run not on in thy own Will, but be retired, ſilent, paſſive, and humbly attentive to this new riſen Light within Thee. Open thy Heart, thy Eyes, and Ears to all its Impreſſions. Let it enlighten, teach, frighten, torment, judge, and condemn Thee, as it pleaſeth, turn not away from it, hear all it ſaith, ſeek for no Relief out of it, conſult not with Fleſh and Blood, but with a Heart full of Faith and Reſignation to God, pray only this Prayer, that God's Kingdom may come, and his Will be done in thy Soul. Stand faithfully in this State of Preparation, thus given up to the Spirit of God, and then the Work of thy Repentance will be wrought in God, and thou wilt ſoon find, that He that is in Thee, is much greater than all that are againſt Thee.

But that thou mayeſt do all this the better, and be more firmly aſſured, that this *Reſignation* to, and *Dependance* upon the working of God's Spirit within Thee, is right and ſound, I ſhall lay before Thee two great, and infallible, and fundamental Truths, which will be as a Rock for thy Faith to ſtand upon.

First, That through all the whole Nature of Things, nothing can *do*, or *be* a real Good to thy Soul, but the *Operation of God* upon it. *Secondly*, That all the Diſpenſations of God to Mankind, from the Fall of *Adam*, to the Preaching of the Goſpel, were only for this *one End*, to fit, prepare, and diſpoſe the Soul for the *Operation* of the Spirit of God upon it. Theſe two great Truths well and deeply apprehended, put the Soul in its right State, in a continual Dependance upon God, in a Readineſs to receive all Good from Him, and will be a continual Source of Light in thy Mind. They will keep thee ſafe from all Errors, and falſe Zeal in Things, and Forms of Religion, from a Sectarian Spirit, from Bigotry, and Superſtition; they will teach Thee the true Difference between the Means and End of Religion, and the Regard thou ſheweſt to the *Shell*, will be only ſo far, as the *Kernel* is to be found in it.

Man, by his Fall, had broke off from his true *Center*, his proper Place in God, and therefore the Life and Operation of God was no more in Him. He was fallen from a Life in God, into a life of *Self*, into an animal Life of Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking in the poor periſhing Enjoyments of this World. This was the *Natural State* of Man

by the Fall. He was an Apoſtate from GOD, and his natural Life was all Idolatry, where *Self* was the great Idol, that was worſhipped inſtead of GOD. See here the whole Truth in ſhort. All Sin, Death, Damnation, and Hell, is nothing elſe but this Kingdom of *Self*, or the various Operations of Self-love, Self-eſteem, and Self-ſeeking, which ſeparate the Soul from GOD, and end in eternal Death and Hell.

On the other Hand, All that is *Grace*, *Redemption*, *Salvation*, *Sanctification*, *Spiritual Life*, and the *New Birth*, is nothing elſe but ſo much of the Life, and Operation of GOD found again in the Soul. It is Man come back again into his *Center*, or *Place* in GOD, from whence he had broke off. The Beginning again of the Life of GOD in the Soul, was then firſt made, when the Mercy of GOD inſpoke into *Adam* a *Seed* of the Divine Life, which ſhould bruiſe the Head of the Serpent, which had wrought itſelf into a human Nature. Here the Kingdom of GOD was again within us, though only as a *Seed*, yet ſmall as it was, it was yet a *Degree* of the Divine Life, which if rightly cultivated, would overcome all the Evil that was in us, and make of every fallen Man, a new born Son of GOD.

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All the Sacrifices, and Inſtitutions of the antient Patriarchs, the *Law* of *Moſes*, with all its Types, and Rites, and Ceremonies, had this *only End*; they were the Methods of Divine Wiſdom for a Time, to keep the Hearts of Men from the Wandrings of Idolatry, in a State of *Holy Expectation* upon GOD, they were to keep the *firſt Seed* of Life in a State of Growth, and make Way for the farther Operation of GOD upon the Soul; or, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, to be as a *Schoolmaſter unto Chriſt*. That is, till the Birth, the Death, the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of CHRIST, ſhould conquer Death, and Hell, open a new Diſpenſation of GOD, and baptize Mankind afreſh with the Holy Ghoſt, and Fire of Heaven. Then, that is, on the Day of *Pentecoſt*, a *new Diſpenſation* of GOD came forth; which on GOD's Part, was the Operation of the Holy Spirit in Gifts and Graces upon the whole Church. And on Man's Part, it was the Adoration of GOD in *Spirit* and *in Truth*. Thus all that was done by God, from the Bruiſer of the Serpent given to *Adam*, to CHRIST's ſitting down on the right Hand of GOD, was all for this End, to remove all that ſtood between GOD and Man, and to make Way for the *immediate*, and *continual* Operation of

GOD

GOD upon the Soul. And that Man, baptized with the Holy Spirit, and born again from Above, ſhould abſolutely renounce *Self*, and wholly give up his Soul to the Operation of GOD's Spirit, to know, to love, to will, to pray, to worſhip, to preach, to exhort, to uſe all the Faculties of his Mind, and all the outward Things of this World, as enlightened, inſpired, moved and guided by the Holy Ghoſt. Who by this laſt Diſpenſation of GOD, was given to be a Comforter, a Teacher, and Guide to the Church, who ſhould abide with it for ever.

This is Chriſtianity, a ſpiritual Society, not becauſe it has no worldly Concerns, but becauſe all its Members, as ſuch, are born of the Spirit, kept alive, animated and governed by the Spirit of God. It is conſtantly called by our LORD the Kingdom of GOD, or Heaven, becauſe all its *Miniſtry* and *Service*, all that is done in it, is done in Obedience and Subjection to *that Spirit*, by which Angels live, and are governed in Heaven. Hence our bleſſed LORD taught his Diſciples to pray, that this Kingdom might come, that ſo GOD's Will might be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven, which could not be, but by that ſame Spirit, by which it is done in Heaven. The ſhort is this: The Kingdom of *Self*, is the

Fall of Man, or the great Apoſtacy from the Life of GOD in the Soul, and every one wherever he be, that liveth unto *Self*, is ſtill under the Fall and great Apoſtacy from GOD. The Kingdom of CHRIST, is the Spirit, and Power of GOD, dwelling and manifeſting itſelf in the Birth of a new inward Man; and no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but *ſo far* as a true Birth of the Spirit is brought forth in him. Theſe two Kingdoms take in all Mankind, he that is not of one, is certainly in the other; Dying to one, is Living to the other.

Hence we may gather theſe following Truths: *Firſt*, Here is ſhewn the true Ground and Reaſon of what was ſaid above, namely, That when the *Call* of GOD to Repentance firſt ariſeth in thy Soul, thou art to be *retired*, *ſilent*, *paſſive*, and humbly attentive to this new riſen Light within thee, by wholly ſtopping, or diſregarding the Workings of thy own Will, Reaſon and Judgment. It is becauſe all theſe are falſe Counſellors, the ſworn Servants, bribed Slaves of thy fallen Nature, they are all Born and Bred in the Kingdom of *Self*; and therefore if a new Kingdom is to be ſet up in thee, if the Operation of GOD is to have its Effect in thee, all theſe natural Powers of *Self*, are to be

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silenced and suppressed, till they have learned Obedience and Subjection to the Spirit of God. Now this is not requiring thee to become a *Fool*, or to give up thy Claim to Sense and Reason, but is the shortest Way to have thy Sense and Reason, delivered from Folly, and thy whole rational Nature strengthened, enlightned, and guided by that Light, which is Wisdom itself.

A Child that obediently denies his own Will, and own Reason, to be guided by the Will and Reason of a truly wise and understanding Tutor, cannot be said to make himself a Fool, and give up the Benefit of his rational Nature, but to have taken the shortest Way to have his own Will and Reason made truly a Blessing to him.

Secondly, Hence is to be seen the true Ground and Necessity of that universal Mortification and Self-denial with regard to all our Senses, Appetites, Tempers, Passions and Judgments. It is because all our whole Nature, as fallen from the Life of God, is in a State of Contrariety to the Order and End of our Creation, a continual Source of disorderly Appetites, corrupt Tempers, and false Judgments. And therefore every Motion of it is to be mortified, changed and purified from its *natural State*, before we can enter

into the Kingdom of GOD. Thus when our LORD ſaith, *Except a Man hateth his Father and Mother, yea, and his own Life, he cannot be my Diſciple*; it is becauſe our beſt Tempers are yet *carnal*, and full of the *Imperfections* of our fallen Nature. The Doctrine is juſt and good: not as if *Father* and *Mother* were to be hated; but *that Love*, which an unregenerate Perſon or *natural Man*, hath towards them, is to be *hated*; as being a blind *Self-love*, full of all the *Weakneſs* and *Partiality*, with which fallen Man loves, honours, eſteems and cleaves to himſelf. This Love, *born* from corrupt Fleſh and Blood, and *polluted* with Self, is to be *hated* and *parted* with, that we may love them with a Love *born* of GOD, with ſuch a Love, and on ſuch a Motive, as CHRIST hath loved us. And then the *Diſciple* of CHRIST far exceeds all others in the Love of Parents. Again, Our *own Life* is to be *hated*; and the Reaſon is plain, it is becauſe there is nothing lovely in it. It is a *Legion* of Evil, a monſtrous Birth of the *Serpent*, the *World* and the *Fleſh*, it is an *Apoſtacy* from the *Life* and *Power* of GOD in the Soul; a Life that is *Death* to Heaven, that is pure unmixed *Idolatry*, that lives wholly to *Self*, and not to GOD, and therefore *all this own Life* is to be abſolutely *hated*, all this Self is

to

to be *denied* and *mortified*, if the Nature, Spirit, Tempers and Inclinations of CHRIST are to be brought to Life in us. For it is as impoſſible to live to both theſe Lives at once, as for a *Body* to move two contrary Ways at the ſame Time. And therefore all theſe Mortifications and Self-denials have an abſolute Neceſſity in the Nature of the Thing itſelf.

Thus when our LORD further ſaith, unleſs a Man forſake *all that he hath he cannot be my Diſciple*. The Reaſon is plain, and the Neceſſity abſolute; It is becauſe *all* that the *natural* Man hath, is in the Poſſeſſion of *Self-love*, and therefore *this Poſſeſſion* is to be abſolutely *forſaken*, and parted with. All that he hath, is to be put into other Hands, to be given to divine Love, or this *natural Man* cannot be changed into a *Diſciple* of CHRIST. For Self-love in *all that it hath*, is earthly, ſenſual and deviliſh, and therefore muſt have *all* taken away from it; and then to the *natural* Man *all* is loſt, he hath *nothing* left, all is laid down at the Feet of JESUS. And then all Things are common, as ſoon as *Self-love* has loſt the Poſſeſſion of them. And then the Diſciple of CHRIST, *though having nothing, yet poſſeſſeth all Things*, all that the *natural* Man hath *forſaken*, is reſtored to the *Diſciple* of CHRIST an *hundred-fold*. For

Self-love, the greateſt of all *Thieves*, being now caſt out, and all that he had ſtolen and hidden, thus taken from him, and put into the Hands of divine Love, every *Mite* becometh a large Treaſure, and Mammon openeth the Door into everlaſting Habitations. This was the Spirit of the *firſt Draught* of a Chriſtian Church at *Jeruſalem*, a Church made truly after the Pattern of Heaven, where the Love that reigns in Heaven reigned in it, where divine Love broke down all the ſelfiſh Fences, the Locks and Bolts of *me*, *mine*, *my own*, &c. and laid all Things common to the Members of this new Kingdom of GOD on Earth.

Now though many Years did not paſs after the Age of the Apoſtles, before *Satan*, and *Self* got footing in the Church, and ſet up Merchandize in the Houſe of GOD; yet this *one Heart*, and *one Spirit*, which then firſt appeared in the *Jeruſalem* Church, is that *one Heart* and *Spirit* of divine Love, to which *all are* called, that would be true Diſciples of CHRIST. And though the Practice of it is loſt as to the Church in general, yet it ought not to have been loſt; and therefore every Chriſtian ought to make it his great Care, and Prayer, to have it reſtored in himſelf. And then, though born in the Dregs of Time, or living in *Babylon*, he will be as truly a Member of the firſt heavenly Church at *Jeruſalem*,

as

as if he had lived in it, in the Days of the Apoſtles. This Spirit of Love, born of that celeſtial Fire, with which CHRIST baptizes his true Diſciples, is alone that Spirit, which can enter into Heaven, and therefore is that Spirit which is to be born in us, whilſt we are on Earth. For no one can enter into Heaven, till he is made heavenly, till the Spirit of Heaven is entered into him. And therefore all that our LORD hath ſaid of denying and dying to *Self*, and of his parting with all that he hath, are Practices abſolutely neceſſary from the Nature of the Thing.

Becauſe all turning to Self, is ſo far turning *from* GOD, and ſo much as we have of Self-love, ſo much we have of a helliſh, earthly Weight, that muſt be taken off, or there can be no Aſcenſion into Heaven. But thou wilt perhaps ſay, if *all Self-love* is to be renounced, then all Love of our Neighbour is renounced along with it, becauſe the Commandment is, only *to love our Neighbour as ourſelves*. The Anſwer here is eaſy, and yet no Quarter given to Self-love. There is but *one only* Love in Heaven, and yet the Angels of GOD love one another in the *ſame Manner*, as they love themſelves. The Matter is thus: The one ſupreme, unchangeable *Rule* of Love, which is a *Law* to all intelligent

Beings of all Worlds, and will be a Law to all Eternity, is this, *viz. That God alone is to be loved for himself*, and *all other Beings only* in *Him, and for Him.* Whatever intelligent Creature lives not under this Rule of Love, is so far fallen from the Order of his Creation; and is, till He returns to this eternal Law of Love, an *Apostate* from GOD, and incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now if GOD alone is to be loved for *Himself*, then no Creature is to be loved for *itself*; and so all *Self-love* in every Creature is absolutely condemned.

And if all created Beings are only to be loved *in* and *for* GOD, then my Neighbour is to be loved, *as* I love myself, and I am only to love myself, as I love my Neighbour, or any other created Being, that is, only *in* and *for* GOD. And thus the Command of loving our Neighbour as ourselves, stands firm, and yet all Self-love is plucked up by the Roots. But what is loving any Creature, only *in*, and *for* GOD? It is when we love it only as it is GOD's *Work*, *Image*, and *Delight*, when we love it merely as it is GOD's, and belongs to Him, this is loving it *in* GOD, and when all that we wish, intend, or do to it, is done from a Love of GOD, for the Honour of GOD, and in Conformity to the Will of GOD, this is loving it *for* GOD. This is the

one Love that is, and must be the Spirit of all Creatures, that live united to GOD. Now this is no speculative Refinement or fine-spun Fiction of the Brain, but the simple Truth, a first Law of Nature, and a necessary Band of Union between GOD and the Creature. The Creature is not in GOD, is a Stranger to Him, has lost the Life of GOD in itself, whenever its Love does not thus begin and end in GOD.

The Loss of this Love, was the *Fall* of Man, as it opened in him a Kingdom of *Self*, in which Satan, the World, and the Flesh, could all of them bring forth their own Works. If therefore Man is to rise from his Fall, and return to his Life in GOD, there is an absolute Necessity that *Self*, with all his Brood of gross Affections, be deposed, that his first Love, in and for which he was created, may be born again in him. CHRIST came into the World to *save Sinners*, to destroy the Works of the Devil. Now *Self* is not only the Seat and Habitation, but the very *Life* of Sin. The Works of the Devil are all wrought in *Self*, it is his peculiar *Workhouse*, and therefore CHRIST is not come as a Saviour from Sin, as a Destroyer of the Works of the Devil in any of us, but *so far* as Self is beaten down, and overcome in us. If it is literally true, what our Lord said, *That his Kingdom*

was

was not of this World, then it is a Truth of the same Certainty, that no one is a Member of this Kingdom, but he that in the literal Sense of the Words, renounces the Spirit of this World. Christians might as well part with half the Articles of their Creed, or but half believe them, as to really refuse, or but by halves enter into these Self-denials.

For all that is in the *Creed*, is only to bring forth this Dying and Death to all, and every Part of the old Man, that the Life and Spirit of CHRIST may be formed in us.

Our Redemption is *this new Birth*; if this is not done, or doing in us, we are still unredeemed. And though the Saviour of the World is come, He is not come in us, He is not received by us, is a Stranger to us, is not ours, if his Life is not within us. His Life is not, cannot be within us, but so far as the Spirit of the World, Self-Love, Self-esteem, and Self-seeking are renounced, and driven out of us.

Thirdly, Hence we may also learn the true Nature and Worth of all *Self-denials* and *Mortifications*. As to their Nature, considered in themselves, they have nothing of *Goodness* or *Holiness*, nor are any real Parts of our Sanctification, they are not the true *Food* or *Nourishment* of the divine Life in our Souls, they

they have no *Quickning, Sanctifying Power* in them, their only Worth consists in this, that they remove the Impediments of Holiness, break down that which stands between God and us, and make Way for the *Quickning, Sanctifying* Spirit of God to operate on our Souls. Which Operation of God is the *one only* Thing that can raise the divine Life in the Soul, or help it to the smallest Degree of real Holiness, or spiritual Life. As in our Creation, we had only that *Degree* of a divine Life, which the Power of God derived into us; as then all that we had, and were, was the *sole Operation* of God in the Creation of us, so in our Redemption, or regaining that first Perfection, which we have lost, all must be again the Operation of God, *every Degree* of the divine Life restored in us, be it ever so small, must and can be nothing else but so much of the Life and Operation of God found again in the Soul. All the Activity of Man in the Works of Self-denial, has no good in itself, but is only to open an Entrance, for the *one only* Good, the Light of God, to operate upon us.

Hence also we may learn the Reason, why many People not only lose the Benefit, but are even the worse for all their Mortifications. It is because they mistake the whole Nature and

and Worth of them. They practiſe them for their *own Sakes*, as Things good in themſelves, they think them to be *real* Parts of Holineſs, and ſo *reſt* in them, and look no *farther*, but grow full of Self-eſteem, and Self-admiration for their own Progreſs in them. This makes them ſelf-ſufficient, moroſe, ſevere Judges of all thoſe that fall ſhort of their Mortifications.

And thus their *Self-denials* do only *that* for them, which *Indulgences* do for other People, they withſtand and hinder the Operation of God upon their Souls, and inſtead of being *really* Self-denials, they ſtrengthen and keep up the Kingdom of *Self*.

There is no avoiding this fatal Error, but by deeply entering into this great Truth, that all our own Activity and Working, has no Good in it, can do no Good to us, but as it leads and turns us in the beſt Manner to the Light and Spirit of God, which alone brings Life and Salvation into the Soul. *Stretch forth thy Hand*, ſaid our Lord to the Man, *that had a withered Hand*; he did ſo, and *it was immediately made whole as the other*.

Now had this Man any Ground for Pride, or a high Opinion of himſelf, for the Share he had in the Reſtoring of his Hand? Yet juſt ſuch is our Share in the Raiſing up of the

Spiritual

Spiritual Life within us. All that we can do by our own Activity, is only like this Man's ſtretching out his Hand; the reſt is the Work of CHRIST, the only Giver of Life to the withered Hand, or the dead Soul. We can only then do living Works, when we are ſo far born again, as to be able to ſay with the Apoſtle, *Yet not I, but Chriſt that liveth in me.* But to return, and further ſhew how the Soul that feels the Call of GOD to Repentance, is to behave under it, that this ſtirring of the divine Power in the Soul, may have its full Effect, and bring forth the Birth of the new Man in CHRIST JESUS. We are to conſider it, (as in Truth it is) as the *Seed* of the divine Nature within us, that can only grow by its *own Strength*, and *Union* with GOD. It is a divine Life, and therefore can grow from nothing but divine Power. When the Virgin *Mary* conceived the Birth of the holy JESUS, all that ſhe did towards it herſelf, was only this ſingle Act of Faith and Reſignation to GOD; *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy Word.* This is all that we can do towards the Conception of that new Man that is to be born in ourſelves. Now this Truth is eaſily conſented to, and a Man thinks he believes it, becauſe he conſents to it, or rather, does not

deny

deny it. But this is not enough, it is to be apprehended in a deep, full, and practical Assurance, in such a Manner as a Man knows and believes that he did not create the *Stars*, or cause Life to rise up in himself. And then it is a Belief, that puts the Soul into a right State, that makes room for the Operation of God upon it. His Light then enters with full Power into the Soul, and his holy Spirit moves and directs all that is done in it, and so Man lives again in God as a new Creature. For this Truth thus firmly believed, will have these two most excellent Effects: *First*, it will keep the Soul fixed, and continually turned towards God, in Faith, Prayer, Desire, Confidence, and Resignation to Him, for all that it wants to have done in it, and to it; which will be a continual Source of all divine Virtues and Graces. The Soul thus turned to God, must be always receiving from Him. It stands at the true Door of all divine Communications, and the Light of God as freely enters into it, as the Light of the *Sun* enters into the *Air*. *Secondly*, It will fix and ground the Soul in a true and lasting Self-denial. For by thus knowing and owning our own *Nothingness* and Inability, that we have no other Capacity for Good, but that of receiving it from God alone,

Self

Self is wholly denied, its Kingdom is deſtroyed; no room is left for ſpiritual Pride and Self-eſteem; we are ſaved from a Phariſaical Holineſs, from wrong Opinions of our own Works and good Deeds, and from a Multitude of Errors, the moſt dangerous to our Souls, all which ariſe from the *Something* that we take ourſelves to be either in Nature or Grace. But when we once apprehend but in ſome good Degree, the *All* of GOD, and the *Nothingneſs* of ourſelves, we have got a Truth whoſe Uſefulneſs and Benefit, no Words can expreſs. It brings a Kind of Infallibility into the Soul, in which it dwells; all that is vain, and falſe, and deceitful, is forced to vaniſh and fly before it. When our Religion is founded on this Rock, it has the Firmneſs of a Rock, and its Height reaches unto Heaven. The World, the Fleſh and the Devil can do no hurt to it; all Enemies are known, and all diſarmed by this great Truth, dwelling in our Souls. It is the Knowledge of the *All* of GOD, that makes *Cherubims*, and *Seraphims*, to be Flames of divine Love. For where this *All* of GOD is truly known, and felt in any Creature, there its whole Breath and Spirit is a Fire of Love, nothing but a pure, diſintereſted Love can riſe up in it, or come from it, a Love that begins and ends in GOD. And

where this Love is born in any Creature, there a Seraphick Life is born along with it. For this pure Love introduces the Creature into the *All* of GOD, all that is in GOD, is opened in the Creature, it is united with GOD, and hath the Life of GOD manifested in it.

There is but *one Salvation* for all Mankind, and that is the *Life* of GOD in the Soul. GOD has but *one Design* or Intent towards all Mankind, and that is to *introduce* or *generate* his own Life, Light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many Images, Temples, and Habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is GOD's good Will to all *Christians*, *Jews*, and *Heathens*. They are all *equally* the Desire of his Heart, his Light continually *waits* for an Entrance into *all* of them, his *Wisdom crieth*, *she putteth forth her Voice*, not here, or there, but every where, in all the Streets of all the Parts of the World.

Now there is but *one possible* Way for Man to attain this Salvation, or Life of GOD in the Soul. There is not one for the *Jew*, another for a *Christian*, and a Third for the *Heathen*. No; GOD is one, human Nature is one, Salvation is one, and the *Way* to it is one; and that is, *the Desire of the Soul turned to* GOD. When this *Desire* is alive and breaks forth in any Creature under Heaven, then the *lost*

Sheep

Sheep is found, and the *Shepherd* hath it upon his Shoulders. Through *this Desire* the Poor *prodigal Son* leaveth his *Husks* and *Swine*, and hasteth to his Father, 'tis because of *this Desire*, that the Father seeth the Son, while yet *afar off*, that he runs out to meet him, falleth on his Neck, and kisseth him. See here how plainly we are taught, that no sooner is this Desire *arisen*, and in *Motion* towards God, but the *Operation* of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its *first Beginnings*, signified by the Father's seeing, and having Compassion on his Son, whilst yet *afar off*, that is, in the first Beginnings of his Desire. Thus does *this Desire* do all, it brings the Soul to God, and God into the Soul, it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one Life with God. Suppose this *Desire* not to be alive, not in Motion either in a *Jew*, or a *Christian*, and then all the Sacrifices, the Service, the Worship either of the *Law* or the *Gospel*, are but *dead* Works, that bring *no Life* into the Soul, nor beget any *Union* between God and it. Suppose this Desire to be awakened, and fixed upon God, though in Souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine Life, or Operation of God enters into them, and the new Birth in Christ is formed in those,

that never heard of his Name. And these are they *that shall come from the East, and from the West, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac in the Kingdom of God.*

Oh my GOD, just and good, how great is thy Love and Mercy to Mankind, that Heaven is thus every where open, and CHRIST thus the *common* Saviour to all that turn the Desire of their Hearts to Thee! Oh sweet Power of the *Bruiser* of the Serpent, born in every Son of Man, that stirs and works in every Man, and gives every Man a Power, and Desire, to find his Happiness in GOD! O holy JESUS, heavenly *Light, that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, that redeemeth every Soul that followeth thy Light, which is *always within Him!* O holy Trinity, immense Ocean of divine Love, in which all Mankind live, and move and have their Being! None are separated from Thee, none live out of thy Love, but all are embraced in the Arms of thy Mercy, all are Partakers of thy divine Life, the Operation of thy holy Spirit, as soon as their Heart is turned to Thee! Oh plain, and easy, and simple Way of Salvation, wanting no Subtleties of Art or Science, no borrowed Learning, no Refinements of Reason, but all done by the simple natural Motion of every Heart, that

truly longs after GOD. For no ſooner is the finite Deſire of the Creature in motion towards GOD, but the infinite Deſire of GOD is united with it, co-operates with it. And in this united Deſire of GOD, and the Creature, is the Salvation, and Life of the Soul brought forth. For the Soul is ſhut out of GOD, and impriſoned in its own dark Workings of Fleſh and Blood, merely and ſolely becauſe it deſires to live to the Vanity of this World. This *Deſire* is its Darkneſs, its Death, its Impriſonment, and Separation from GOD.

When therefore the *firſt Spark* of a Deſire after GOD ariſes in thy Soul, cheriſh it with all thy Care, give all thy Heart into it, it is nothing leſs than a Touch of the divine *Loadſtone*, that is to draw Thee out of the Vanity of Time, into the Riches of Eternity. Get up therefore and follow it as gladly as the *Wiſe-men of the Eaſt* followed the *Star* from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for Thee, as the Star did for them, it will lead Thee to the Birth of JESUS, not in a Stable at *Bethlehem* in *Judea*, but to the Birth of JESUS in the *dark Center* of thy own fallen Soul.

I ſhall conclude this *firſt Part*, with the Words of the heavenly Illuminated, and bleſſed *Jacob Behmen*.

'It is much to be lamented, that we are 'so blindly led, and the Truth withheld from 'us through imaginary Conceptions; for if 'the *divine Power* in the inward Ground of 'the Soul, was manifeſt, and working with 'its Luſtre in us, then is the whole tri-une 'GOD preſent in the *Life* and *Will* of the 'Soul; and the Heaven, wherein GOD dwell-'eth, is opened in the Soul, and *There*, in 'the Soul, is the *Place* where the Father 'begetteth his Son, and where the Holy 'Ghoſt proceedeth from the Father and the 'Son.

'CHRIST ſaith, *I am the Light of the 'World, he that followeth me, walketh not in 'Darkneſs.* He directs us only to Himſelf. 'He is the Morning Star, and is generated 'and riſeth in us, and ſhineth in the Dark-'neſs of our Nature. O how great a Tri-'umph is there in the Soul, when He ariſeth 'in it! then a Man knows, as he never 'knew before, that he is a Stranger in a fo-'reign Land.'

FINIS.

THE

SECOND PART

OF THE

Spirit of PRAYER:

OR,

The SOUL Rising out of the VANITY of TIME,

INTO THE

RICHES of ETERNITY.

Being several DIALOGUES between ACADEMICUS, RUSTICUS, and THEOPHILUS. At which HUMANUS was present.

By *WILLIAM LAW*, M.A.

LONDON:
Printed for W. INNYS in *Pater-noster-Row*.
M.DCC.L.

THE

FIRST DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Academicus, *Ruſticus*, and *Theophilus*.

At which *Humanus* was preſent.

Acad. WELL met, honeſt *Ruſticus*, I can now tell you with much Pleaſure, that we ſhall ſoon ſee a *Second Part* of the Spirit of Prayer. And as ſoon as I get it, I will come, and read it to you.

Ruſt. I have often told you, *Academicus*, that I wonder'd at your Eagerneſs and Impatience to ſee more of this Matter. As to my Part, I have no ſuch Thirſt within me, and ſhould make no Complaint, if it never came out.

Acad. My Friend *Ruſticus*, you can't read, and that is the Reaſon, that you are not in my State of Impatience to ſee another Book.

Ruſt. Indeed *Academicus*, you quite miſtake the Matter. The firſt Part of the *Spirit of Prayer*, you read to me more than three

or four Times, and that is the Reaſon, why I am in no State of Eagerneſs after a Second Part. I have found in the firſt Part, all that I need to know of God, of Chriſt, of my ſelf, of Heaven, of Hell, of Sin, of Grace, of Death, and of Salvation. That all theſe Things have their *Being*, their *Life* and their *working* in my own Heart. That God is always in me, that Chriſt is always within me, that he is the inward *Light* and *Life* of my Soul, a *Bread* from Heaven, of which I may always eat, a *Water* of Eternal *Life* ſpringing up in my Soul, of which I may always drink. O my Friend, theſe Truths have opened a new Life in my Soul, I am brought home to my Self, the Veil is taken off from my Heart, I have found my God, I know that his Dwelling Place, his Kingdom is within me. What need we then call out for Books written only with Pen and Ink, when ſuch a Book as this, ſo full of Wonders, is once open'd in our own Hearts? My Eyes, my Ears, my Thoughts are all turn'd inwards, becauſe all that God, and Chriſt, and Grace are doing for me, all that the Devil, the World and the Fleſh are working againſt me, are only to be known and found there. What need then of ſo much News from abroad, ſince all that concerns either *Life* or *Death*,

are

are all transacting, and all at work within me?

How could I be said to have felt these great Truths, to be sensible of these Riches of Eternity treasur'd up in my Soul, to know what a great Good the divine Nature is in me, and to me, if instead of turning all the Desire, and Delight of my Heart towards them, I only felt a Longing and Desire to read more concerning the Spirit of Prayer. No *Academicus*, another, and a better Fire is kindled within me; my Heart is in motion, and all that is within me tends towards God; and I find that nothing concerns me more, than to keep my Heart from wandering after any thing else. I now know to what it is that I am daily to die, and to what it is that I am daily to live, and therefore look upon every Day as lost, that does not help forwards both this Death, and this Life in me. I have not yet done half, what the first Part of the Spirit of Prayer directs me to do, and therefore have but little Occasion to call out for a second.

Theoph. Indeed *Academicus*, I must own that honest *Rusticus*, as you call'd him, has spoken well. Your Education has so accustomed you to the Pleasure of reading variety of Books, that you hardly propose any other End in reading, than the Entertainment of

your Mind, thus the Spirit of Prayer has only awakened in you a Desire to see another Part upon the same Subject. This Fault is very common to others, as well as Scholars, and even to those who only delight in reading good Books.

Philo for this twenty Years has been collecting and reading all the *spiritual* Books he can hear of. He reads them, as the *Criticks* read Commentators and Lexicons, to be nice and exact in telling you the *Stile*, *Spirit*, and *Intent* of this or that spiritual Writer, how one is more accurate in this, and the other in that. *Philo* will ride you forty Miles in Winter to have a Conversation about spiritual Books, or to see a Collection larger than his own. *Philo* is amazed at the Deadness and Insensibility of the Christian World, that they are such Strangers to the inward Life and spiritual Nature of the Christian Salvation, he wonders how they can be so zealous for the outward Letter and Form of Ordinances, and so averse to that spiritual Life, that they all point at, as the one thing needful. But *Philo* never thinks how wonderful it is, that a Man who knows Regeneration to be the whole, should yet content himself with the Love of Books upon the new Birth, instead of being born again himself. For all that is chang'd

in

in *Philo*, is his Taſte for Books. He is no more dead to the World, no more deliver'd from himſelf, is as fearful of Adverſity, as fond of Proſperity, as eaſily provok'd, and pleas'd with Trifles, as much govern'd by his *own* Will, Tempers, and Paſſions, as unwilling to deny his Appetites, or enter into War with himſelf, as he was *twenty Years* ago. Yet all is well with *Philo*, he has no Suſpicion of himſelf, he dates the Newneſs of his Life, and the Fullneſs of his Light, from the time, that he diſcover'd the Pearl of Eternity in ſpiritual Authors.

All this, *Academicus*, is ſaid on your Account, that you may not loſe the Benefit of this Spark of the divine Life that is kindled in your Soul, but may conform yourſelf ſuitably to ſo great a Gift of God.

It demands at preſent an Eagerneſs of another Kind, than that of much reading even upon the moſt ſpiritual Matters.

Acad. I thank you, *Theophilus*, for your good Will towards me, but did not imagine my Eagerneſs after ſuch Books to be ſo great and dangerous a Miſtake. And if I don't yet entirely give into what you ſay, it is becauſe a Friend of your's, has told us, (and as I thought by way of Direction) that he has been a diligent Reader of all the ſpiri-

tual Authors from the apoſtolical *Dionyſius* down to the illuminated *Guion*, and celebrated *Fenelon* of *Cambray*: And therefore it would never have come into my Head, to ſuſpect it to be a Fault, or dangerous to follow his Example.

Theoph. I have ſaid nothing, my Friend, with a Deſign of hindering your Acquaintance with all the truly ſpiritual Writers. I would rather in a right Way help you to a true Intimacy with them. For they are Friends of God, entruſted with his Secrets, and partakers of the divine Nature. And he that converſes rightly with them, has a Happineſs, that can hardly be over valued.

My Intention is only to abate for a Time, a Spirit of Eagerneſs after much reading, which in your State has more of Nature than Grace in it, which ſeeks Delight in a Variety of new Notions, and rather gratifies Curioſity, than reforms the Heart.

Suppoſe you had ſeen an Angel from Heaven, who had diſcover'd to you a Glimpſe of its own internal Brightneſs, and of that glorious Union in which it liv'd with God, opening more of its ſelf to the inward Sight of your Mind, than you could either forget or relate. Suppoſe it had told you with a piercing Word, and living Impreſſion, that all its

own

own angelick, and heavenly Brightneſs was hid in your ſelf, conceal'd from you under a beſtial covering of Fleſh and Blood; that this Fleſh and Blood was become the Maſter of it, would not ſuffer it to breathe, or ſtir, or come to Life in you. Suppoſe it had told you, that all your Life had been ſpent in helping this Fleſh and Blood to more and more Power over you, to hinder you from knowing and feeling this divine Life within you. Suppoſe it had told you, that to this Day you had lived in the groſſeſt *ſelf-Idolatry*, loving, ſerving, honouring and adoring your ſelf, inſtead of loving, ſerving, and adoring God with all your Heart, and Soul and Spirit. That all your Intentions, Projects, Cares, Pleaſures, and Indulgences had been only ſo much Labour to bring you to the Grave in a total Ignorance of that great Work, for which alone you was born into the World.

Suppoſe it had told you, that all this Blindneſs and Inſenſibility of your State, was all obſtinately, and willfully brought upon your ſelf, becauſe you had boldly ſlighted and reſiſted all the daily inward, and outward Calls of God to your Soul, all the Teachings, Doings, and Sufferings of a Son of God to redeem you. Suppoſe it left you with this *Farewell*, O Man, awake, thy Work is great, thy Time

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is ſhort, I am thy laſt Trumpet; the *Grave* calls for thy Fleſh and Blood, thy Soul muſt enter into a new Lodging. To be born again, is to be an Angel. Not to be born again, is to become a Devil.

Tell me now, *Academicus*, what would you expect from a Man, who had been thus awakened, and pierced by the Voice of an Angel? Could you think he had any Senſe left, if he was not caſt into the deepeſt Depth of Humility, ſelf Dejection, and ſelf Abhorrence? Caſting himſelf, with a broken Heart at the Feet of the divine Mercy, deſiring nothing but that from that Time, every Moment of his Life might be given unto God, in the moſt perfect Denial of every Temper, Will and Inclination, that nouriſh'd the Corruption of his Nature. Wiſhing and praying from the Bottom of his Heart, that God would lead him into, and through every Thing inwardly and outwardly, that might deſtroy the evil Workings of his Nature, and awaken all that was holy, and heavenly within him, that the Seed of Eternity, the Spark of Life, that he had ſo long quench'd, and ſmother'd under earthly Rubbiſh, might breathe, and come to Life in him.

Or would you think he was enough affected with this angelick Viſit, if all that it had awakened

awakened in him, was only a Longing and eager Desire to hear the same, or another Angel talk again?

Acad. Oh *Theophilus*, you have said enough. For all that is within me consents to the Truth and Justness of what you have said. I now feel in the strongest Manner, that I have been rather amused, than edified by what I have read.

Theoph. A spiritual Book, *Academicus*, is a Call to as real and total a Death to the Life of corrupt Nature, as that which *Adam* died in Paradise, was to the Life of Heaven. He indeed died at once totally to the divine Life in which he was created, but as our Body of Earth is to last, to the End of our Lives, so to the End of our earthly Life, every Step we take, every Inch of our Road is to be made up of Denial, and dying to ourselves. Because all our Redemption consists in our regaining that first Life of Heaven in the Soul, to which *Adam* died in Paradise. And therefore the one single Work of Redemption, is the one single Work of Regeneration, or the raising up of a Life, and Spirit and Tempers, and Inclinations contrary to that Life and Spirit which we derive from our earthly fallen Parents. To think therefore of any thing, but the continual, total

tal Denial of our earthly Nature, is to overlook the very one thing on which all depends. And to hope for any thing, to truſt or pray for any thing but the *Life of God*, or a *Birth* of Heaven in our Souls, is as uſeleſs to us, as placing our Hope and Truſt in a graven Image. Thus ſaith the Chriſt of God, the one Pattern, and Author of our Salvation, *If any Man will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf, hate his own Life, take up his daily Croſs and follow me.* And again unleſs a Man be born again from above, of Water and the Spirit, he cannot ſee, or enter into the Kingdom of God.

Now is your Time, *Academicus*, to enter deeply into this great Truth. You are juſt come out of the Slumber of Life, and begin to ſee with new Eyes the Nature of your Salvation. You are charmed with the diſcovery of a Kingdom of Heaven hidden within you, and long to be entertained more and more with the Nature, Progreſs, and Perfection of the new Birth, or the Opening of the Kingdom of God in your Soul.

But my Friend, ſtop a little. It is indeed great Joy, that the *Pearl of great Price* is found, but take Notice, that it is not your's, you can have no Poſſeſſion of it, till as the Merchant did, *you ſell all that you have*, and buy

buy it. Now *Self* is all that you have, it is your ſole Poſſeſſion, you have no Goods of your *own*, nothing is your's but *this Self*. The Riches of *Self* are your *own Riches*, but *all this Self* is to be parted with, before the Pearl is yours. Think of a lower Price, or be unwilling to give thus much for it, plead in your Excuſe, that you keep the Commandments, and then you are that very rich young Man in the Goſpel, who went away ſorrowful from our Lord, when he had ſaid, *if thou wilt be perfect*, that is, if thou wilt obtain the Pearl, ſell all that thou haſt and give to the Poor, that is, die to all thy *Poſſeſſion of Self*, and then thou haſt given all that thou haſt to the Poor, all that thou haſt is devoted and uſed for the Love of God and thy Neighbour. This ſelling all, *Academicus*, is the Meaſure of your dying to *Self*, all of it is to be given up, it is an *apoſtate* Nature, a *ſtolen* Life, brought forth in Rebellion againſt God, it is a continual Departure from him. It corrupts every thing it touches, it defiles every thing it receives, it turns all the Gifts and Bleſſings of God into Covetouſneſs, Partiality, Pride, Hatred, and Envy. All theſe Tempers are born, and bred, and nouriſhed in *Self*, they have no other Place to live in, no Poſſibility of Exiſtence, but

but in that Creature which is fallen from a Life in God, into a Life in *Self*.

Acad. Pray, Sir, tell me more plainly, what this Self is, ſince ſo much depends upon it.

Theoph. It is Hell, it is the Devil, it is Darkneſs, Pain and Diſquiet. It is the one only Enemy of Chriſt, the great Antichriſt. It is the ſcarlet Whore, the fiery Dragon, the old Serpent, the devouring Beaſt, that is mentioned in the Revelation of St. *John*.

Acad. You rather terrify than inſtruct me, by this Deſcription.

Theoph. It is indeed a very frightful Matter, it contains every thing that Man has to dread and hate, to reſiſt and avoid. Yet be aſſured, my Friend, that careleſs and merry as the World is, every Man that is born into it, has all theſe Enemies to overcome within himſelf. And every Man, till he is in the way of Regeneration, is more or leſs governed by them. No Hell in any remote Place, no Devil that is ſeparate from you, no Darkneſs or Pain, that is not within you, no Antichriſt either at *Rome* or *England*, no furious Beaſt, no fiery Dragon, without, or apart from you, can do you any Hurt. It is your own Hell, your own Devil, your own Beaſt, your own Antichriſt, your own Dragon that lives in

your

your own Heart's Blood, that alone can hurt you.

Die to this Self, to this inward Nature, and then all outward Enemies are overcome. Live to this Self, and then when this Life is out, all that is within you, and all that is without you, will be nothing elſe but a mere ſeeing and feeling this Hell, Serpent, Beaſt, and fiery Dragon.

See here, *Academicus*, the twofold Nature of every Man. He has within him a redeeming Power, the *Meekneſs* of the heavenly Life, called the *Lamb of God*. This Seed is ſurrounded, or encompaſſed with the Beaſt of fleſhly Luſts, the Serpent of Guile and Subtilty, and the Dragon of fiery Wrath. This is the great Trial, or Strife of human Life, whether a Man will live to the Luſts of the *Beaſt*, the Guile of the *Serpent*, the Pride and Wrath of the *fiery Dragon*, or give himſelf up to the Meekneſs, the Patience, the Sweetneſs, the Simplicity, the Humility of the *Lamb of God*.

This is the whole of the Matter between God and the Creature. On one ſide Fire and Wrath, awakened firſt by the rebellious Angels; and on the other ſide, the Meekneſs of the Lamb of God, the Patience of divine Love comingdown from Heaven, to ſtop,

and overcome the Fire and Wrath that is broken out in Nature and Creature. Your Father *Adam* has introduced you into the Fire and Wrath of the fallen Angels, into a World from whence Paradiſe is departed. Your Fleſh and Blood is kindled in that Sin, which firſt brought forth a murdering *Cain*. But dear Soul, be of good Comfort, for the *Meekneſs*, the *Love*, the *Heart*, the *Lamb* of God is become Man, has ſet himſelf in the Birth of thy own Life, that in him, and with him, and by a Birth from him, Heaven and Paradiſe, may be again opened both within thee, and without thee, not for a Time, but to all Eternity.

Once more, *Academicus*. Every Man in this World ſtands *eſſentially* in Heaven, and in Hell, both as to that which is within him, and that which is without him. For Man and the World are both in the *ſame* fallen State. The *Curſe* in the Earth is that *ſame thing* in outward Nature, that the *Loſs* of the divine Life was to the Soul of *Adam*. The whole World in all its Nature is nothing elſe but a real Mixture of Heaven, and Hell. The Sun and the Water of this World, is that which keeps under, and overcomes the Darkneſs, Wrath and Fire of Hell, and carries on the vegetable and animal Life

that is in it. The Light of the Sun bleſſes all the Workings of the Elements, and the cool ſoftning Eſſence of the Water keeps under the Fire, and Wrath of Nature. In all *animal* Creatures the Birth of *Light* in their own Life, and the *Water* of their own Blood, both produced by the Light of the Sun, and the Water of outward Nature, brings forth an Order of earthly Creatures, that can enjoy the Good that is in this World, in Spite of the Wrath of Hell, and the Malice of Devils.

But Man has more than all this, for being at firſt created an Angel, and intended by the Mercy of God to be an Angel again, has the Light of Heaven, and the Water of eternal Life, both given to *Adam* in that *Seed of the Woman*, which was to *bruiſe* the Head of the Serpent, that is to overcome the Curſe, the Fire, and Wrath, or Hell, that was awaken'd in the fallen Soul. So that Man has not only in common with the other Animals, the Light and Water of outward Nature to quench the Wrath of his own Life in this mixed World, but he has the Meekneſs, the Light, the Love, the Humility of the holy Jeſus, as a Seed of Life born in his Soul, to bring forth that firſt Image of God, in which *Adam* was created.

This, my Friend, is the true Ground of all true Religion, it means nothing, it intends nothing, but to overcome that earthly Life, which overcame *Adam* in the Fall, that made him a Priſoner of Hell, and a Slave to the corrupt Workings of earthly Fleſh and Blood. And therefore you may ſee, and know with a mathematical Certainty, that the one thing neceſſary for every fallen Soul, is to die to all the Life, that we have from this World, that the Life of Heaven may be again born in him. The Life of this World, is the Life of the *Beaſt*, the *Scarlet Whore*, the old *Serpent*, and the fiery Dragon.

Hence it is that Sin rides in Triumph over Church and State, and from the Court to the Cottage, all is overrun with Senſuality, Guile, Falſeneſs, Pride, Wrath, Envy, Selfiſhneſs, and every Form of Corruption. Every one ſwims away in this Torrent, but he who hears and attends to the Voice of the Son of God *within* him, calling him to die to this Life, to take up his Croſs, and follow him. Much learned Pains has been often taken to prove, *Rome*, or *Conſtantinople*, to be the Seat of the Beaſt, the Antichriſt, the Scarlet Whore, *&c.* But alas, they are not at ſuch a Diſtance from us, they are the Properties of fallen human Nature, and are all of them alive

alive in our own Selves, till we are dead or dying to all the Spirit, and Tempers of this World. They are every where, in every Soul, where the heavenly Nature, and Spirit of the holy Jesus is not. But when the human Soul turns from itself, and turns to God, dies to itself, and lives to God in the Spirit, Tempers, and Inclinations of the holy Jesus, loving, pitying, suffering and praying for all its Enemies, and overcoming all Evil with Good, as this Christ of God did; then, but not till then, are these Monsters separate from it. For Covetousness, and Sensuality of all kinds, are the very devouring *Beast*, Religion governed by a worldly, trading Spirit, and gratifying the partial Interests of Flesh and Blood, is nothing else but the *Scarlet Whore*, Guile and Craft, and Cunning are the very Essence of the *Old Serpent*; Self-Interest and Self-Exaltation are the whole Nature of *Antichrist*. Pride, Persecution, Wrath, Hatred and Envy are the very Essence of the fiery Dragon.

This, *Academicus*, is the fallen human Nature, and this is the *Old Man*, which is alive in every one, tho' in various Manners, till he is born again from above. To think therefore of any thing in Religion, or to pretend to real Holiness, without totally dying to this old Man, is building Castles in the Air, and can bring forth nothing, but

Satan in the Form of an Angel of Light. Would you know, *Academicus*, whence it is, that ſo many falſe Spirits have appeared in the World, who have deceived themſelves, and others, with falſe Fire, and falſe Light, laying Claim to Inſpirations, Illuminations, and Openings of the divine Life, pretending to do Wonders under extraordinary Calls from God? It is this, they have turned to God, without turning from themſelves, would be alive in God, before they were dead to their own Nature, a thing as impoſſible in itſelf, as for a Grain of Wheat to be alive before it dies.

Now Religion in the Hands of Self, or corrupt Nature, ſerves only to diſcover Vices of a worſer kind, than in Nature left to itſelf. Hence are all the diſorderly Paſſions of religious Men, which burn in a worſer Flame, than Paſſions only employed about worldly Matters. Pride, Self-Exaltation, Hatred and Perſecution under a Cloak of religious Zeal, will ſanctify Actions, which Nature, left to itſelf, would be aſhamed to own.

You may now ſee, *Academicus*, with what great Reaſon I have called you, at your firſt ſetting out, to this great Point, the *total dying to Self*, as the only Foundation of a ſolid Piety. All the fine Things you hear or read of an inward and ſpiritual Life in God, all your Expectations of the Light and holy Spirit of God, will

will become a falſe Food to your Soul, till you only ſeek for them thro' Death to Self.

Obſerve, Sir, the Difference, which Cloaths make in thoſe, who have it in their Power to dreſs as they pleaſe; ſome are all for Shew, Colours, and Glitter, others are quite fantaſtical and affected in their Dreſs; ſome have a grave and ſolemn Habit, others are quite ſimple and plain in the whole Manner. Now all this Difference of Dreſs is only an outward Difference, that covers the ſame poor Carcaſs, and leaves it full of all its own Infirmities. Now all the Truths of the Goſpel, when only embraced and poſſeſſed by the *old Man*, make only ſuch ſuperficial Difference, as is made by Cloaths. Some put on a ſolemn, formal, prudent, outſide Carriage, others appear in all the Glitter, and Shew of religious Colouring, and ſpiritual Attainments; but under all this outſide Difference, there lies the poor fallen Soul, impriſoned, unhelped, in its own fallen State. And thus it muſt be, it is not poſſible to be otherwiſe, till the ſpiritual Life begins at the true Root, grows out of *Death*, and is born in a broken Heart, a Heart broken off from all its own natural Life. Then Self-Hatred, Self-Contempt, and Self-Denial is as ſuitable to this new born Spirit, as Self-Love, Self-

Eſteem, and Self-Seeking is to the unregenerate Man. Let me, therefore, my Friend, conjure you, not to look forward, or caſt about for ſpiritual Advancement, till you have rightly taken this *firſt* Step in the ſpiritual Life. All your future Progreſs depends upon it. For this Depth of Religion goes no deeper, than the Depth of your Malady. For Sin has its Root in the Bottom of your Soul, it comes to Life with your Fleſh and Blood, and breaths in the Breath of your natural Life, and therefore till you die to Nature, you live to Sin, and whilſt this Root of Sin is alive in you, all the Virtues you put on, are only like fine painted Fruit hung upon a bad Tree.

Acad. Indeed *Theophilus*, you have made the Difference between true and falſe Religion as plain to me, as the Difference between Light and Darkneſs. But all that you have ſaid, at the ſame time is as new to me, as if I had lived in a Land, where Religion had never been named. But, pray Sir, tell me how I am to take this *firſt Step*, which you ſo much inſiſt upon.

Theoph. You are to turn wholly from your Self, and to give up your Self wholly unto God, in this or the like twofold Form of Words or Thoughts.

" Oh

" Oh my God, with all the Strength of " my Soul, assisted by thy Grace, I desire " and resolve to resist and deny all my own " Will, earthly Tempers, selfish Views, and " Inclinations; every thing that the Spirit " of this World, and the Vanity of fallen " Nature prompts me to. I give myself up " wholly and solely unto Thee, to be all " thine, to have and do, and be, inwardly " and outwardly according to thy good Plea- " sure. I desire to live for no other Ends, " with no other Designs, but to accomplish " the Work which thou requirest of me, " an humble, obedient, faithful, thankful " Instrument in thy Hands, to be used as " thou pleasest."

You are not to content yourself, my Friend, with now and then, or even many times making this Oblation of yourself to God. It must be the daily, the hourly Exercise of your Mind, till it is wrought into your very Nature, and becomes an essential State and Habit of your Mind, till you feel yourself as habitually turned from all your own Will, selfish Ends, and earthly Desires, as you are from Stealing and Murder; till the whole Turn and Bent of your Spirit points as constantly to God, as the Needle touched with the Loadstone does to the North. This, Sir,

is your firſt, and neceſſary Step in the ſpiritual Life, this is the Key to all the Treaſures of Heaven, this unlocks the ſealed Book of your Soul, and makes room for the Light and Spirit of God to ariſe up in it. Without this, the ſpiritual Life is but ſpiritual Talk, and only aſſiſts Nature to be pleas'd with a Holineſs that it has not.

The Neceſſity of this firſt Step, and the Folly of pretending to ſucceed without it, is thus repreſented by our bleſſed Lord. *What Man intending to build a Houſe.*

All our Ability, and Preparation to ſucceed in this great Affair, lies in this *firſt Step.* You may perhaps think this an hard Saying. But don't go away ſorrowful, like the young Man in the Goſpel, becauſe he had great Poſſeſſions. For my Friend, you little think what a Deliverance you will have from all Hardſhips, and what a Flow of Happineſs is found even in this Life, as ſoon as the Soul is *thus* dead to *Self*, freed from its own Paſſions and wholly given up to God; of which I ſhall ſpeak to you by and by. I have told you the Price of the new Birth. I ſhall now leave you to conſider, whether you will be ſo wiſe a Merchant, as to give up all the Wealth of the old Man for this heavenly Pearl. I don't expect your Anſwer now, but will ſtay for it till to-morrow. But,

But, pray Gentlemen, who is this *Humanus*, I don't remember to have ſeen him before? he ſeems not willing to ſpeak, yet is often biting his Lips at what is ſaid.

Ruſt. This *Humanus*, Sir, is my Neighbour, but ſo ignorant of the Nature of the Goſpel, that he is often trying to perſuade me into a Diſbelief of it. I ſay ignorant, (tho' he is a learned Man) becauſe I am well aſſur'd, that no Man ever did, or can oppoſe the Goſpel, but through a total Ignorance of what it is in itſelf. For the Goſpel, when rightly underſtood, is irreſiſtible, it brings more good News to the human Nature, than Sight to the Blind, Limbs to the Lame, Health to the Sick, or Liberty to the condemn'd Slave. But this Neighbour of mine has never yet been in ſight of the Truth, as it is in the Goſpel, he knows nothing of the Grounds and Reaſon of it, but what he has pick'd up out of Books, that have been written againſt it, and for it. He often makes uſe of one Maxim of the Goſpel, to overthrow it, and wonders that ſo plain and honeſt a Man as I am, will not ſubmit to it. He ſays, if it be a Truth, as the Goſpel ſaith, *that the Tree muſt be known by its Fruit, and that a good Tree cannot bring forth corrupt Fruit*, we need only look at the Lives of Chriſtians, the Craft of

Prieſts, the Wars, Contentions, Hatreds, Sects, Parties, Hereſies, Diviſions, Outrages and Perſecutions which Chriſtianity has brought forth, we need only look at this, to have all our Senſes and Reaſon aſſure us, that the Goſpel muſt be a bad Tree.

But this is enough concerning the Man. He comes with me at his own earneſt Deſire, which has lately ſeiz'd him, and upon his own ſtrict Promiſe, not to interrupt our Converſation, but to be a ſilent Hearer, till it is all over. And therefore if you pleaſe, Sir, I beg our Converſation may for a while turn upon the chief Points, aſſerted in the Spirit of Prayer, for two Reaſons, firſt that *Academicus* may ſee what Reaſons I had for ſaying, that Book had given me a ſufficient Inſtruction; and alſo that *Humanus* hearing theſe great Points, may hear the whole Ground and Nature, the Neceſſity and Bleſſedneſs of the Chriſtian Redemption, ſet forth in ſuch a degree of Light, and Truth, and Amiableneſs, as he had no Notion of before.

Theoph. Your Neighbour is welcome, and I pray God to give him an Heart attentive to thoſe Truths, which have made ſo good an Impreſſion upon you. The firſt Point that you deſire us to ſpeak to, is concerning the Original of this temporal World. How God

was mov'd to create it, upon the Fall of a whole Hoſt, or Kingdom of Angels, who by their Revolt from God, loſt the divine Light, and awaken'd in themſelves, and the Region in which they dwelt, the dark, wrathful Fire of Hell. For Hell is nothing elſe, but Nature departed, or excluded from the Beams of divine Light. The *Materiality* of their Kingdom was *Spiritual*, and the Light that glanced through it, that fill'd its Tranſparency with an infinity of glorious Wonders, was the Son of God, the Brightneſs of the Father's Glory. The *Spirit* that animated the inward Life of theſe Glorious Angels, and that mov'd with its ſweet Breath, through all this *glaſſy Sea*, opening and changing new Scenes in the Mirror of divine Wiſdom, was the *holy Spirit* of God, that eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. Thus did theſe celeſtial Spirits live, and move, have their Being in God. All was Heaven, and they all were as ſo many created Gods, eternally ſinking down, and riſing up into new Heights, and Depths of the Riches of the divine Nature. With this Degree of Glory and Happineſs was the whole Extent of the Place of this World fill'd, before the Angels fell. And to this Degree of Happineſs and Heavenly Glory, will the whole Place of

this

this World be again rais'd, when the Love of God ſhall have finiſh'd the great Work of the Redemption of Mankind. Heaven again, and Angels again, rais'd out of the Miſery of Time, to ſing eternal Praiſes to the holy Trinity, and to the Lamb, that has overcome Sin and Death, and Hell, and turn'd all the Wrath, and Miſery and Darkneſs of this World, into a Heaven never more to be chang'd. Oh *Ruſticus*, what Sentiments do theſe Things raiſe in you?

Ruſt. Indeed, Sir, they almoſt make me to forget that I am in the Body. You have ſet me upon a Mountain, from which, whether I look backwards, or forwards, or downwards, all is equally ſurprizing; backwards, a Breach made in Heaven, the firſt opening of Hell and Darkneſs, and a new Creation out of the Ruins of the fallen Angels; forwards, Time and all temporal Nature riſing again into its firſt Eternity; downwards a Globe of Earth, the Seat of War between Heaven and Hell, where Men are born to partake of the dreadful Strife, and have only the little Span of Life, either to overcome with God, or be overcome by the Devil to all Eternity. Oh Sir, what great Things are theſe? I wiſh that all the World, as well as my Neighbour *Humanus*, were forc'd to be ſilent Hearers of them. But, pray Sir, go on. *Theoph.*

Theoph. When God saw the *Darkness that was upon the Face of the Deep*, and the whole angelick Habitation become a Chaos of Confusion, the *Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of the Waters*, that is, the Spirit of God began to operate again in this outward Darkness, that cover'd this once transparent *glassy Sea*; for from a glassy Sea, it was become a Deep cover'd with Darkness, which was soon to take another Nature; to have its Fire and Wrath converted into Sun and Stars, its Dross and Darkness into a Globe of Earth, its Mobility and Moisture into Air and Water, when the Spirit of God began to move and operate in it. But before this Chaos had enter'd into this new Order, God said, *Let there be Light and there was Light*. This Light, my Friend, was not the present Light of this World, which now governs the Night and the Day; for the Sun, the Moon, and Stars were not created till the fourth Day. But the Light which God then spake forth, was a Degree of Heaven, that was commanded to glance into the darkned Deep, which penetrated through all the Depth of the Chaos, and intermix'd it self through every Part; not turning the whole into a Region of Light, but only by its quickening Virtue fitting, disposing, and preparing every Part, to take that Change,

Change, which every following Day of the Creation was to bring forth, in and out of this darkened deep. For Darkneſs is Death, and Light is Life. This was the Nature and Work of that firſt Light, which God called forth on the firſt Day; It was God's baptizing the dead *Chaos* with the Spirit of Life, that it might be capable of a Reſurrection into a new Creation.

See here the Uniformity of the divine Procedure, with regard both to fallen Nature and Creature. When the Creature (Man) was fallen, his Redemption was begun by God's ſpeaking a *Seed* of Light, called the Seed of the Woman into the Birth of his Life. This alone could qualify him for the new Creation in Chriſt Jeſus. When *Nature* was fallen, its Reſtoration was begun in the ſame Manner, Light was commanded to enter into it, or rather to riſe up in it, this was its Power or Poſſibility of coming out of its fallen State.

Marvel not, *Ruſticus*, that I call this firſt Light of the firſt Day, a Degree of Heaven. For Light is natural, eſſential, and inſeparable from Heaven, it belongs only to Heaven, and wherever elſe it is, it is only there as a Gift from Heaven. And therefore ſo much as there is of Light in this World, ſo much there is of Heaven in it. Darkneſs is natural,

tural, eſſential, and inſeparable from Hell, and can be no where elſe, but where Hell can in ſome Degree open and diſcover itſelf. And wherever, and in what Degree Darkneſs can ſhew itſelf, there, and in the ſame Degree is the Nature of Hell known and felt. This World is made up of Light, and Darkneſs, not only as it conſiſts of Day and Night, but becauſe every earthly Thing is itſelf a Mixture of Light and Darkneſs. The Darkneſs is the Evil, and the Light is the Good that is in every thing. If the Darkneſs was predominant in Vegetables, they would all be rank Poiſon, if in Animals, they would be all as ſo many wrathful venomous Serpents of Hell. If the Light did quite ſuppreſs the Darkneſs in Vegetables, they would be like the Fruits which were to have been Man's Food in Paradiſe.

Ruſt. Theſe things, *Theophilus*, ſtrike a moſt amazing Light into all the Myſteries both of Nature and Grace. But they don't more enlighten, than they edify the Mind. They are all reforming Truths, they have the Nature of Alteratives, they purge the Heart of all its Droſs, they force it to drop all its Pretenſions to earthly things, as the poor deceitful Baits of fallen Nature, and to long for nothing, but to have That firſt Heaven, and

Life

Life in God, for which Angels and Men were at first created. But I want to shew to my Friend *Humanus*, as it were in one View, that Chain of Truths, which follows from what you have said, but I had rather you would do it.

Theoph. Agreed. And I will set them in order thus. 1st, That the Place of this World is the very Place, or Region, which belonged to *Lucifer* and his Angels. 2dly, That every thing that we see in this World, all its Elements, the Stars, the Firmament, *&c.* are nothing else but the invisible Things of the fallen World, made visible in a new, and lower State of Existence. 3dly, That before the Rebellion of the Angels, there was nothing but God, and Heaven and heavenly Beings. Light and Love, and Joy and Glory, with all the Wonders thereof, were the only Things seen and felt by the Angels. Darkness and Fire with every Quality thereof were absolutely unknown to the Angels, they had no more Suspicion of them, than of the Possibility of Sickness, Pains, Heat, and Cold. All they aimed at, was at being higher in the Glories, and Powers and Light of that Heaven in which they lived. But their turning to their own Strength to effect this, was their whole turning from God, and a falling into

Nature

Nature without God, which was the first Discovery of *Darkness*, Wrath, and Fire, and Pain and Torment. 4thly, Hence it appears that *Darkness* is the Ground of the Substance, or Materiality of Nature, *Fire* is its Life, and *Light* is its glorious Transmutation into the Kingdom of Heaven, and *Spirit* is the Opener of all its Wonders. All that can be conceived, is either God, or Nature, or Creature; God is the holy Trinity without, or before Nature, but Nature is the Manifestation of the holy Trinity in a tri-une Life of *Fire*, *Light* and *Spirit*.

5thly, Here we see the plain and true Original of all Evil, without any Perplexity, or Imputation upon God. That Evil is nothing else but the Wrath, and Fire and Darkness of Nature broken off from God. That the Punishment, the Pain, or the Hell of Sin, is no designedly prepared, or arbitrary Penalty inflicted by God, but the natural and necessary State of the Creature, that leaves, or turns from God, 6thly, That the Will of the Creature is the only Opener of all Evil, or Good in the Creature, the Will stands between God and Nature, and must in all its Workings unite either with God, or Nature, the Will totally resigned, and given up to God, is one Spirit with God, and God dwell-

eth in it, the Will turned from God, is taken Priſoner in the Wrath, Fire and Darkneſs of Nature.

7thly, Here we ſee, *how* and *why* a Creature can loſe, and die to all its Happineſs, and Perfection, and from a beauteous Angel, become a deformed Devil. It is becauſe Nature has no Beauty, Happineſs, or Perfection, but ſolely from the *Manifeſtation*, or *Birth* of the holy Trinity in it. God manifeſted in Nature, is the only Bleſſing, Happineſs, and Perfection of Nature. Therefore the Creature, that in the Working of its Will is turned from God, muſt have as great a Change brought forth in it, as that of Heaven into Hell, forced to live, but to have no other Life, but that of its own gnawing Worm, left to it itſelf.

8thly, Hence we ſee, the deep Ground, and abſolute Neceſſity of the Chriſtian Redemption, by a Birth from above, of the Light and Spirit of God, demonſtrated in the moſt abſolute Degree of Certainty. It is becauſe all Nature is in itſelf nothing, but a *hungry, wrathful Fire* of Life, a tormenting Darkneſs, unleſs the Light and Spirit of God kindle it into a Kingdom of Heaven. And therefore the fallen Soul can have no *poſſible Relief*, or Redemption, it muſt be to all Eternity an

hungry,

hungry, dark, fiery, tormenting Spirit of Life, unleſs the Light, or Son, and Spirit of God, be born again in it.

Hence alſo it follows, that in all the Poſſibility of things, there is and can be but one Happineſs, and one Miſery. The one Miſery, is Nature, and Creature left to itſelf, the one Happineſs, is the Life, the Light and Spirit of God manifeſted in Nature and Creature. This is the true Meaning of thoſe Words of our Lord, *there is but one that is good, and that is God.*

9thly, Hence it is alſo ſeen, that there is and can be but *one true* Religion for the fallen Soul, and that is, the Dying to *Self* to *Nature* and *Creature*, and a turning with all the *Will*, the *Deſire*, and *Delight* of the Soul to God. Sacrifices, Oblations, Prayers, Praiſes, Rites and Ceremonies, without this, are but as ſounding Braſs, and tinkling Cymbals. Nay Zeal and Conſtancy, and Warmth, and Fervour in the Performance of theſe religious Practices is not the Matter; for Nature, and Self-Love can do all this. But theſe religious Practices are then only Parts of true Religion, when they mean nothing, ſeek nothing, but to keep up a continual Dying to Self, and all worldly things, and turn all the Will, Deſire, and Delight of the Soul to God

alone. *Laſtly*, there is and can be only *one* Salvation for the fallen Soul, and that is Heaven open'd again in the Soul, by the Birth of ſuch a Life, Light and Spirit, as is born in Angels. For *Adam* was created to poſſeſs that Heaven from which the Angels fell; but nothing can enter into Heaven, but the angelick Life, which is born of Heaven. The loſs of this angelick Life, was the Fall of *Adam*, or that Death which he dy'd, on the Day he did eat of the earthly Fruit, therefore the Regeneration, or new Birth of his firſt angelick Life, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Aſk not therefore, whether we are ſav'd by Faith, or by Works, for we are ſav'd by neither of them. Faith and Works are at firſt only *preparatory* to the new Birth, afterwards they are the true *genuine Fruits* and Effects of it. But the new Birth, a Life from Heaven, the new Creature, call'd *Chriſt in us*, is the one only Salvation of the fallen Soul. Nothing can enter into Heaven, but this Life which is born of, and comes from Heaven.

Ruſt. I thank you, *Theophilus*, for ſetting theſe awakening Truths in ſo ſtrong a Light. And I think it is not poſſible, for my Friend *Humanus*, to be unaffected with them.

They muſt needs open in him, a new Way of thinking about Religion, and ſhew him the

the deep and ſolid Ground of the abſolute Neceſſity of the Chriſtian Redemption, and incline him to be a willing Hearer of that which follows.

Theoph. I hope it will be ſo, *Ruſticus*, and what I would here, and through every Point, we ſpeak of, obſerve to you, Friend *Humanus*, is this, that the Chriſtian Religion is the *one only* true *Religion of Nature*, deeply and neceſſarily founded in the *Nature* of Things, that its Doctrines are not founded in an *arbitrary Appointment* of God, but have their *natural and neceſſary* Reaſon, why they cannot be otherwiſe, as has here been ſhewn in the one great Point of Regeneration, which is the whole of Man's Salvation, and the one only Thing intended by all Revelation from the Fall of Man to the End of the World. Now the true Ground of the one true Religion of Nature, cannot be known or ſeen into, but by going back to the Beginning of Things, and ſhewing how they came into their preſent State. We muſt find out *why* and *how* Religion came to be neceſſary, and on *what* its Neceſſity is founded. Now this cannot be done, unleſs we find out what *Sin*, and *Evil*, and *Death*, and *Darkneſs* are in themſelves, and *how* they came into Nature, and Creature. For this alone can ſhew us, what Religion is

true, is *natural*, is *neceſſary*, and alone ſufficient to remove all Evil, Sin and Diſorder out of the Creation. For this Reaſon, we began with the Grounds and Reaſons of the Creation of this World, ſhewing how it came to be as it is. But this could not be done, but by going ſo far back as the Fall of Angels. For it was their Revolting from God, that brought *Wrath*, and *Fire*, and *Thickneſs*, and *Darkneſs*, and *Death* into Nature and Creature, and ſo gave occaſion to this new Creation, to its being in ſuch a State, and of ſuch a Nature as it is.

For who does not ſee, that this firſt Deadneſs, Thickneſs, Wrath, Fire and Darkneſs, caus'd by the Angels Sin, are the very *Materials* out of which this World is made? For are not the Fire, the Air, the Water, the Earth, the Rocks and Stones of this World, the Rage of Heat and Cold, the ſucceſſion of Day and Night, the Wrath of Storms and Tempeſts an undeniable and daily Proof of all this? Now when we thus ſee what Sin and Evil, and Death, and Darkneſs is in Nature, and how they came into it, then we ſee alſo, how and what they are, and how they came into the Creature, becauſe the Creature has its Form, its Being in and out of Nature. They came into Nature, or roſe

up

up in it, by Nature's being broke off from God, and ſo loſing the Light and Spirit of God, which made it to be a Kingdom of Heaven; we ſee alſo that when this diſorder'd Nature was to be taken out of its fallen Eſtate by a new Creation, that to do this, the *Spirit of God mov'd*, or enter'd again into the Darkneſs of the Waters, and the Light of God was call'd into it. A plain Proof, that the Malady of Nature, was nothing elſe but *its Loſs* of the Light, and Spirit of God working in it. This ſhews us alſo, that the fallen Creature is to be reſtor'd, or put into a Way of Recovery in *one and the ſame* Way as fallen Nature, viz. by the Spirit and Light of God *entering* into it again, and bringing forth a new Birth, or Creation in Chriſt Jeſus. Juſt as the Spirit and Light entering into the *Chaos*, created or turn'd the Angels ruin'd Kingdom into a Paradiſe on Earth. God help him, who can ſee no Light, or Truth here. Your Friend *Humanus* lays claim to a Religion of Nature, and Reaſon, I join with him with all my Heart. No other Religion can be right, but that which has it Foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his Creatures, but what the *State* of their Nature calls them to. Nature is his great Law, that ſpeaks his whole Will

both in Heaven, and on Earth, and to obey Nature, is to obey the God of Nature, to pleaſe him, and live to him in the higheſt Perfection. God indeed has many *after Laws*, but it is after his Creatures have fallen from Nature, and loſt its Perfection. But all theſe after Laws have no other End, or Intention but to repair Nature, and bring Men back to their firſt natural State of Perfection. What ſay you now, *Academicus*, to all theſe Matters?

Acad. You Sir, and *Ruſticus*, both of you know, how theſe Matters have affected me, ever ſince I read the Book call'd the *Appeal to all that Doubt*, &c. From that Time, I have ſtood upon new Ground, I have ſeen Things in ſuch a Newneſs of Light, and Reality, as makes me take my former Knowledge for a Dream. A Dream I may juſtly ſay, ſince all my Labour was taken up in ſearching into a Seventeen Hundred Years Hiſtory of Doctrines, Diſputes, Decrees, Hereſies, Schiſms, and Sects, wherever to be found in *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*. From this goodly Heap of Stuff crowded into my Mind, I have been ſettling Matters betwixt all the preſent Chriſtian Diviſions both at home and abroad, according to the beſt Rules of Criticiſm. Having little or no other Idea of a Religious Man, than that of a ſtiff Maintainer

tainer of certain Points againſt all thoſe that oppoſe them. And in this reſpect, I believe I may ſay, that I only ſwam away in the common Torrent.

And in this laborious Dream, I had in all likelihood ended my Days, had not that Book, and ſome others of the like Kind, ſhewn me, that Religion lay nearer home, was not to be dug out of Diſputes, but lay hid in my ſelf, like a Seed, which for Want of its proper Nouriſhment, could not come to the Birth. But however tho' Matters ſtand thus with myſelf, and I ſeem to be enter'd into a Region of Light; yet I muſt not forget to tell you, what ſome of my learned Friends object to all this. They ſay, that in thoſe Books there are many Things aſſerted, which have not the *plain Letter* of Scripture to ſupport them, and that therefore Men of ſober Learning are cautious of giving into Opinions, not ſtrictly Grounded on the plain Letter of Scripture, however fine and plauſible they may ſeem to be.

Theoph. Is there not ſome Reaſon, *Academicus*, to take this Objection of your Learned Friends to be a mere Pretence? For what is more fully grounded upon the plain Letter of Scripture, than the Doctrine of a real Regeneration, a new Birth of the *Word*, the *Son*, and

and holy *Spirit* of God, really brought forth in the Soul? And yet *this plain Letter* of Scripture, upon the moſt important of all Points, the very Life and Eſſence and whole Nature of our Redemption, is not only *over look'd*, but openly *oppos'd* by the generality of Men of ſober Learning. But this Point has not only the plain Letter of Scripture for it, but what the Letter aſſerts, is abſolutely requir'd by the whole Spirit and Tenour of the new Teſtament. All the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles proceed upon the ſuppoſed Certainty of this one great Point.

A Son of God united with, and born in our Nature, that his Nature may have a Birth in us, a holy Spirit breathing in the Birth and Life of our Souls, quickening the dead Life of fallen *Adam*, is the Letter and Spirit of the Apoſtles Writings, grounded upon the plain Letter of our Lord's own Words, that unleſs we are born again from above, of the Son, Word, Water and Spirit of God, we cannot enter or ſee the Kingdom of Heaven.

Again, is it not the plain Letter of Scripture that *Adam* died the Day that he did eat of the earthly Tree? Have we not the moſt ſolemn Aſſeveration of God for the Truth of this? Was not the Change which *Adam* found in himſelf, a Demonſtration of the

Truth

Truth of this Fact? Inſtead of the Image and Likeneſs of God in which he was created, the Beauty of Paradiſe, he was ſtript of all his Glory, confounded at the ſhameful Deformity of his own Body, afraid of being ſeen, and unable to ſee himſelf uncovered; delivered up a Slave to the Rage of all the Stars and Elements of this World, not knowing which way to look, or what to do in a World, where he was dead to all that he formerly felt, and alive only to a new and dreadful feeling of Heat, and Cold, Shame and Fear, and horrible Remorſe of Mind, at his ſad Entrance in a World, whence Paradiſe, and God, and his own Glory was departed. Death enough ſurely?

Death in its higheſt Reality, much greater in its Change, than when an Animal of earthly Fleſh and Blood is only changed into a cold lifeleſs Carcaſs.

A Death that in all Nature has none like it, none equal to it, none of the ſame Nature with it, but that which the Angels died, when from Angels of God, they became living Devils, ſerpentine, hideous Forms, and Slaves to Darkneſs. Say that the Angels loſt no Life, that they did not die a real Death, becauſe they are yet alive in the Horrors of Darkneſs, and then you may ſay with the

ſame

ſame Truth, that *Adam* did not die when he loſt God, and Paradiſe, and the firſt Glory of his Creation, becauſe he afterwards lived, and breathed in a World, which was outwardly in all its Parts full of the ſame Curſe, that was within himſelf. But farther, not only the plain Letter of the Text, and the Change of State, which *Adam* found in himſelf, demnoſtrated a real Death to his former State, but the whole Tenour of Scripture abſolutely requires it. All the Syſtem of our Redemption proceeds upon it. For tell me, I pray, what Need of a Redemption, if *Adam* had not loſt his firſt State of Life? What Need of the Deity to enter again into the human Nature, not only as acting, but taking a Birth in it, and from it, what Need of all this myſterious Method, to bring the Life from above again into Man, if the Life from above had not been loſt. Say that *Adam* did not die, and then tell me, what Senſe or Reaſon there is in ſaying, that the Son of God became Man, and died on the Croſs to reſtore to him the Life that he had loſt? It is true indeed that *Adam* in his Death to the divine Life, was left in the Poſſeſſion of an earthly Life. And the Reaſon is plain, why he was ſo. For his great Sin conſiſted in his Deſire, and Longing to enter into the Life of this World,

World, to know its Good and Evil, as the Animals of this World do; it was his chuſing to have a Life of this World after this *new Manner*, and his entering upon the Means of attaining it, that was his Death to the Divine Life. And therefore it is no Wonder, that after his Death to Heaven and Paradiſe, he found himſelf ſtill alive, as an earthly Animal. For the Deſire of this earthly Life was his great Sin, and the Poſſeſſion of this earthly Life was the proper Puniſhment, and Miſery that belonged to his Sin; and therefore it is no Wonder, that *that Life*, which was the proper Puniſhment, and real Diſcovery of the Fruits of his Sin ſhould ſubſiſt, after his Sin had put an End to the Life of Paradiſe and God in him. But wonderful is it to a great Degree, that any Man ſhould imagine, that *Adam* did not die on the Day of his Sin, becauſe he had as good a Life left in him, as the Beaſts of the Field have.

For is this the Life, or is the Death that ſuch Animals die, the Life and Death with which our Redemption is concerned? Are not all the Scriptures full of a Life, and Death of a much higher Kind and Nature? And do not the Scriptures make Man the perpetual Subject to whom this higher Life and Death belongs? What Ground or Reaſon therefore

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can there be to think of the Death of an Animal of this World, when we read of the Death that *Adam* was assuredly to die the Day of his Sin? For does not all that befel him on the Day of his Sin, shew that he lost a much greater Life, suffered a more dreadful Change than that of giving up the Breath of this World. For in the Day of his Sin, this Angel of Paradise, this Lord of the new Creation fell from the Throne of his Glory (like Lucifer from Heaven) into the State of a poor darkened, naked, distressed Animal of gross Flesh and Blood, unable to bear the odious Sight of that which his new opened Eyes forced him to see; inwardly and outwardly feeling the Curse awakened in himself, and all the Creation, and reduced to have only the Faith of the Devils, to *believe* and *tremble*. Proof enough surely, that *Adam* was dead to the Life and Light, and Spirit of God, and that with this Death, all that was divine and heavenly in his Soul, his Body, his Eyes, his Mind and Thoughts was quite at an End. Now this Life to which *Adam* then died, is that Life which all his Posterity are in want of, and cannot come out of that State of that Death into which he fell, but by having this first Life of Heaven born again in them. Now is there any Reason to say, that

Mankind in their natural State, are not dead to that firſt Life in which *Adam* was created, becauſe they are alive to this World? Yet this is as well, as to ſay that *Adam* did not dye a real Death, becauſe he had afterwards an earthly Life in him. How comes our Lord to ſay, that *unleſs ye eat the Fleſh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, ye have no Life in you.* Did he mean ye have no earthly Life in you. How comes the Apoſtle to ſay he that hath the Son of God has Life, but he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life? Does he mean the Life of this World? No. But both Chriſt and his Apoſtle aſſert this great Truth, that all Mankind are in the State of *Adam's* firſt Death, till they are made alive again by a Birth of the Son, and Holy Spirit of God brought forth in them. So plain is it, both from the expreſs Letter, and Spirit of Scripture, that *Adam* dy'd a real Death to the Kingdom of God in the Day of his Sin. Take away this Death, and all the Scheme of our Redemption has no Ground left to ſtand upon.

Judge now, *Academicus*, who leaves the Letter of Scripture, your Learned Friends, or the Author of the *Appeal*. They leave it, they oppoſe it in that, which is the very Life of Chriſtianity.

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For without the *Reality* of a new Birth, founded on the Certainty of a *real Death* in the Fall of *Adam*, the Chriſtian Scheme is but a Skeleton of empty Words, a Detail of ſtrange Myſteries between God and Man, that do nothing, and have nothing to do.

On the other hand, look now at the Things ſet forth in the *Appeal*, concerning the Fall of Angels, the Nature and Effects of their Revolt, and the Creation of this World as deduc'd therefrom. They neither *leave* nor *oppoſe* any Letter or Doctrine of Scripture. They add nothing to Religion, but the *full Proof* of all its Articles; they intend nothing but to open the *original Ground*, and true Reaſon of the Chriſtian Redemption, and the abſolute Neceſſity of its being ſuch, as the Goſpel declares. Now the *Letter* of Scripture does not do this in open Words, it ſets not forth the *why*, and *how*, Things are, either in Nature and Grace, it teaches not the *Ground*, or Philoſophy of the Chriſtian Faith, it contents itſelf with bare *Facts*, and *Doctrines*, and calls for *ſimple* Faith and Obedience. No wonder therefore, that when the *natural* and *neceſſary* Ground of the Chriſtian Redemption is *open'd*, that the Letter of Scripture is not *Step* by *Step* appeal'd to, for every Thing that is ſaid. And yet many Things

may be ſufficiently grounded on Scripture, that are not ſo expreſs'd in the *Letter*. The *Sadducees* deny'd that there was any Reſurrection at all, and this they did, becauſe they could not find it in the *expreſs Letter* of the five Books of *Moſes*. And yet it ſeems, that the Reſurrection was *plainly* and *ſtrongly* taught there. For thus ſaith our Lord.—That the Dead ſhall riſe again, *Moſes* ſhew'd at the Buſh, when he ſaid, *the Lord is the God of Abraham, Iſaac*, &c. *For he is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living* *. This ſhews us that a Thing may be fully and ſufficiently prov'd from Scripture, which is not plainly expreſs'd in the Letter. And thus ſtands the Matter with Regard to thoſe great, and edifying Truths ſet forth in the *Appeal*. They are *truly Scriptural*, they have their *Ground* and *Authority* from Scripture, tho' not ſo open and expreſs in the Letter, as Matters of Faith, and neceſſary Doctrine are. For is not the Fall of Angels a Scripture Truth? Is not the Deſolation, which their Fall brought into Nature, and the very Place of this World, a Scripture Truth? What elſe can be meant by *Darkneſs upon the Face of the Deep?* What Darkneſs, or what Deep, but in the Place of this

* Luke xx. 37. 38.

World? What Darkneſs, or State of the Deep, but ſuch a one, as God, was about to raiſe out of its diſorder'd State? And does not the Letter of Scripture ſhew, that out of this *Darkneſs and Waters*, and State of the Deep, the Spirit and Light of God entring into them, brought forth the Earth, the Stars, the Sun and all the Elements into a Form of a new World?

To aſk for a particular Text of Scripture, ſaying in ſo many expreſs Words, that the Place of this World, is the very Place and Extent of the Kingdom of the fallen Angels, is quite ridiculous, and without the leaſt Ground in Reaſon, as is enough ſhewn in the *Appeal*. For does not our Lord expreſsly call the *Devil a Prince of this World?* But how could this Name belong to him, but becauſe he is here in his own firſt Region, and Territories, and has ſtill ſome Power, till all the Evil, that he had rais'd in it, ſhall be entirely ſeparated from it. For was not this World rais'd out of the Materials of the fallen Angels Kingdom, and was not the Wrath, and Fire and Darkneſs of their Fall, ſtill in ſome Degree remaining in every Part of this World, they could have no more Power in it, than they have in Heaven, they muſt be as entirely incapable of ſeeing or entring in-

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to it, as they are of ſeeing, or entring into the Kingdom of Heaven. For they have Nothing but Evil in their Nature, they can touch Nothing, move Nothing, ſee Nothing, feel Nothing, taſte Nothing, act in Nothing but that very Evil, Darkneſs, Fire, and Wrath, and Diſorder which they firſt awakened, and kindled both in themſelves and their Kingdom. And therefore it is a Truth of the utmoſt Certainty, that they can be no where, but where there is ſomething of that Evil ſtill ſubſiſting, which they brought forth. And this may paſs for Demonſtration, (if there be any ſuch Thing) that the Scriptures themſelves demonſtrate the Place of this World to be the very Place and Region in which the Angels fell. And they ſtill are here, becauſe their Kingdom is not wholly deliver'd from all the Evil they had rais'd in it, but is to ſtand for a Time, only in a State of Recovery; where they themſelves muſt ſee, in ſpite of all the Rage and Malice of their fiery Darts, that the *Myſtery* of a Lamb of God born upon Earth, will raiſe Creatures of Fleſh and Blood, amidſt the Ruins of their ſpoil'd Kingdom, to be a Hoſt of Angels in Heaven reſtor'd; and themſelves plung'd into a Hell, that is cut off from every Thing, but their own Wrath, Fire and Darkneſs. And all

this, *Academicus*, to make it known through all the Regions of Eternity, that *Pride* can degrade the higheſt Angels into Devils, and *Humility* raiſe fallen Fleſh and Blood to the Thrones of Angels. This, this is the great End of God's raiſing a new Creation, out of the fallen Kingdom of Angels, for this End it ſtands in its State of War, a War betwixt the Fire and Pride of fallen Angels, and the Meekneſs and Humility of the Lamb of God; it ſtands its thouſands of Years in this Strife, that the laſt Trumpet may ſound *this great* Truth through all Heights and Depths of Eternity. *That Evil can have no Beginning, but from Pride, nor any End, but from Humility.*

Oh *Academicus*, what a Blindneſs there is in the World! What a Stir is there amongſt Mankind about *Religion*, and yet almoſt all ſeem to be afraid of *That*, in which alone is *Salvation.*

Poor Mortals! What is the one Wiſh and Deſire of your Hearts? What is it that you call Happineſs, and Matter of Rejoicing? Is it not when every Thing about you, helps you to ſtand upon *higher Ground*, gives full Nouriſhment to *ſelf Eſteem*, and gratifies every *Pride* of Life? And yet *Life* itſelf, is the

Loſs

Loſs of every Thing, unleſs *Pride* be *overcome*. Oh ſtop a while in Contemplation of this great Truth. It is a Truth as unchangeable as God, it is written, and ſpoken through all Nature; Heaven and Earth, fallen Angels, and redeem'd Men, all bear Witneſs to it. The Truth is this. *Pride muſt die in you*, or *Nothing of Heaven can live in you*. Under the Banner of this Truth, give up your ſelves to the meek and humble Spirit of the holy Jeſus, the Overcomer of all Fire and Pride and Wrath. This is the one Way, the one Truth, and the one Life. There is no other open Door into the Sheep-fold of God. Every Thing elſe is the *working* of the Devil in the *fallen Nature* of Man. Humility muſt ſow the Seed, or there can be no Reaping in Heaven. Look not at Pride only as an unbecoming Temper, not at Humility only as a decent Virtue, for the one is Death, and the other is Life, the one is all Hell, and the other is all Heaven.

So much as you have of Pride, ſo much you have of the fallen Angel alive in you; ſo much as you have of true Humility, ſo much you have of the Lamb of God within you. Could you ſee with your Eyes, what *every ſtirring* of Pride does to your Soul, you would beg of every Thing you meet, to tear the

Viper from you, though with the Loſs of an Hand, or an Eye. Could you ſee what a ſweet, divine transforming Power there is in Humility, what a heavenly Water of Life it gives to the fiery Breath of your Soul, how it expels the Poiſon of your fallen Nature, and makes room for the Spirit of God to live in you, you would rather wiſh to be the *Footſtool* of all the World, than to want the ſmalleſt Degree of it. Excuſe, *Academicus*, this little Digreſſion, if it be ſuch; for the Subject we were upon, forc'd me into it.

Acad. Indeed, Sir, the Leſſon you have here given, is the ſame, that the whole Nature of the Fall of Angels, and the whole Nature of the Redemption of Man, daily reads to every Creature; and he who alone can redeem the World, has plainly ſhewn us, wherein the Life and Spirit of our Redemption muſt conſiſt, when he ſaith, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.* Now if this Leſſon is unlearnt, we muſt be ſaid to have *left* our Maſter, as thoſe Diſciples did, *who went back, and walked no more with him**. But if you pleaſe, *Theophilus*, we will now break off till the Afternoon.

Theoph. Give me Leave firſt, *Academicus*,

* *John* vi.

but

but juſt to mention one Point more, to ſhew to you ſtill farther how unreaſonably your Friends object to the *Appeal*; the Want of the plain Letter of Scripture. Now let it be ſuppoſed, that the Account of the Fall of Angels, the Creation, *&c.* given in the *Appeal* has not Scripture *enough*——Take then the contrary Opinion, which is that of your Friend's, *viz.* That all Worlds, and all Things are created *out of nothing*.

Shew me now, *Academicus*, I don't ſay a Text, but the *leaſt Hint* of Scripture, that by all the Art of commenting, can ſo much as be drawn to look that way. It is a *Fiction*, big with the groſſeſt Abſurdities, and *contrary* to every Thing that we know, either from Reaſon or Scripture, concerning the Riſe, and Birth and Nature of Things, that have begun to be. *Adam* was not created out of Nothing, for the Letter of *Moſes* tells us in the plaineſt Words, *out of what* he was created or form'd, both as to his inward, and his outward Nature. He tells us alſo as expreſly out of *what*, *Eve*, the next Creature, was created. But from the Time of *Adam* and *Eve*, the Creation of every human Creature, is a Birth *out of* its Parents Body and Soul, or whole Nature. And to ſhew us how *all Things*, or Worlds, as well as all living Creatures, are

not created *out of Nothing*, St. *Paul* appeals to this very Account, that *Moſes* gives of the Woman's being form'd *out of the Man*, but *all Things* (ſays he) *are out of God* *. Here this *Fiction* of a Creation *out of Nothing*, is by the plain and open Letter of Scripture abſolutely remov'd from the whole Syſtem of created Things, or Things which begin to be; for St. *Paul*'s Doctrine is, that *all Things* come into Being *out of God*, in the ſame Reality, as the Woman was form'd, or created *out of* Man. So again, *There is to us but one God, out of whom are all Things* *; for ſo you know the Greek ſhould be tranſlated, not of, but *out of* God, not of, but *out of* the Man. The *Fiction* therefore, which I ſpeak of, is not only without, but expreſly *contrary* to the plain Letter of Scripture. For every Thing that we ſee, every Creature that has Life, is by the Scripture account a *Birth* from *ſomething elſe*. And here, Sir, you are to take Notice of a *Maxim* that is not deniable, that the Reaſon why *any* Thing proceeds from a *Birth*, is the Reaſon why *every* Thing *muſt* do ſo. For a *Birth* would not be in Nature, but becauſe Birth is *the only* Procedure of Nature. Nature itſelf is a *Birth* from God,

* 1 *Cor.* xi. 12.

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the *first Manifestation* of the hidden, inconceivable God, and is so far from being *out of* Nothing, that it is the Manifestation of *all that* in God, which was before unmanifest. As Nature is the first Birth, or Manifestation of God, or Discovery of the divine Powers; so all Creatures are the *Manifestation* of the Powers of Nature, brought into a Variety of Births, by the Will of God *out of* Nature. The first Creatures that are the nearest to the Deity, are *out of* the highest Powers of Nature, by the Will of God, willing that Nature should be manifested in the Rise and Birth of Creatures *out of* it. Nature directed, and govern'd by the Wisdom of God, goes on in the Birth of one Thing *out of* another. The spiritual Materiality of Heaven brings forth the Bodies, or Heavenly Flesh and Blood of Angels, as the Materiality of this World brings forth the Birth of gross Flesh and Blood. The spiritual Materiality of Heaven, so far as the Extent of the Kingdom of fallen Angels reach'd, has by various Changes, occasion'd by their Fall, gone thro' a Variety of *Births*, or *Creations*, till some of it came down to the Thickness of *Air*, and *Water*, and the Hardness of *Earth* and *Stones*. But when

* 1. *Cor.* viii. 6.

Things

Things have ſtood in this State, their appointed Time, the laſt purifying Fire kindled by God, will take away all *Thickneſs*, *Hardneſs*, and *Darkneſs*, and bring all the divided Things, and Elements of this World back again, to be that firſt *glaſſy Sea*, or heavenly *Materiality*, in which the Throne of God is ſet, as was ſeen by St. *John* in the Revelation made to him.

But the Fiction of the Creation *out of Nothing*, is not only contrary to the Letter and Spirit of the Scripture Account of the Riſe, and Birth of Things, but is in itſelf full of the groſſeſt Abſurdities, and horrid Conſequences. It *ſeparates* every Thing from God, it leaves *no Relation* between God and the Creature, nor any *Poſſibility* for any *Power*, *Virtue*, *Quality*, or *Perfection* of God to be in the Creature. For if it is created *out of Nothing*, it cannot have *Something* of God in it. But I here ſtop. For as you know, we have agreed, if God permit, to have hereafter one Day's entire Converſation, on the Nature and End of the Writings of *Jacob Behmen*, and the right Uſe and Manner of reading them, and all that, as preparatory to a more correct *Engliſh Edition* of his Works, from the original *German* Language; ſo this and ſome other Points ſhall be adjourn'd to that Time. In the Afternoon, we will proceed only on

ſuch Matters, as may farther ſet the Chriſtian Redemption in its true and proper Light before your Friend *Humanus*.

Acad. I am very glad, *Theophilus*, that I have mention'd theſe Objections to you, tho' they were of no Weight with me; ſince you have thereby had an Occaſion of giving ſo full an Anſwer to them. The Matter ſtands now in this plain and eaſy Point of Light.

In the *Appeal* we have a Syſtem of uniform Truths, concerning the fall of Angels, their ſpoil'd and darken'd Kingdom, and the Creation of this World as rais'd out of it. We have the Creation and Fall of Man, his Regeneration, and the Manner of it, all open'd, and explain'd according to the *Letter and Tenour* of Scripture, from their deepeſt Ground in ſuch a Manner, as to give Light and Clearneſs into all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, to expell all Difficulties and Abſurdities, that had crept into it; and the whole Scheme of our Redemption prov'd to be abſolutely neceſſary both from Scripture, and all that is ſeen, and known in Nature and Creature.

On the other Hand, the Opinion which is and muſt be receiv'd, if the Account in the *Appeal* is rejected, appears to be a *Fiction*, that has no Senſe, no Reaſon, no Fact, no Appearance in Nature, nor one ſingle Letter of

of Scripture to ſupport it. But ſtands in the utmoſt Contrariety to all that the Scripture ſaith of the Creation of every Thing. And is in itſelf full of the groſſeſt Abſurdities, raiſing Darkneſs and Difficulties in all Parts of Religion, that can never be remov'd from it. For a Creation that has nothing of God in it, can explain nothing that relates to God. For a Creation out of Nothing, has no better Senſe in it, than a Creation *into Nothing*. My Friends, for this Time, Adieu.

The End of the firſt DIALOGUE.

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SECOND DIALOGUE.

Theoph. LET us now ſpeak of *Adam* in his firſt Perfection, created by God to be a Lord, and Ruler of this new created World, to people it with an Hoſt of angelic Men, till Time had finiſhed its Courſe, and all Things fitted to be reſtored to that State, from which they were fallen by the Revolt of Angels.

For the Reſtoration of all Things to their firſt glorious State, by making the Good to overcome the Evil, was the End which God propoſed by the State and Manner of this new Creation.

Adam was the choſen Inſtrument of God, to conduct this whole Affair, to keep up this new made World in the State, in which God had created it, not *to till the Earth*, which we now plow, but to keep *That*, which is now called the *Curſe* in the Earth, *covered*, *hid*, and *overcome* by that Paradiſe in which he was created. For this End, he was created in a twofold Nature, of the Powers of Heaven, and the Powers of this World. Inwardly, he had the celeſtial Body and Soul of

of an Angel, and he had this angelic Nature united to a Life and Body taken from the Stars, and Elements, of this outward World. As Paradiſe overcame, and concealed all the Wrath of the Stars and Elements, and kept that *Evil*, which is called the *Curſe*, from being known, or felt; ſo *Adam*'s angelic, heavenly Nature, which was the Paradiſe of God within him, kept him quite ignorant of the Properties of that earthly Nature that was under it; He knew and ſaw, and felt nothing in himſelf, but a Birth of Paradiſe, that is, a Life, Light, and Spirit, of Heaven. For he had no Difference from an Angel in Heaven, but that this World was joined to him, and put under his Feet. And this was done, becauſe he was created by God, to be the *reſtoring Angel*, to do all that in this outward World, which God would have to be done in it, before it could be reſtored to its firſt State. And therefore he muſt have the Nature of all this World in him, becauſe he was to act in it, and upon it, as its *reſtoring Angel*, and yet with ſuch Diſtinction from it, with ſuch Power upon it, and over it, as the Light has upon, and over Darkneſs. Does not now the whole Spirit of the Scriptures conſent to this Account of *Adam*'s firſt Perfection? Do not

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all the chief Points of our Redemption demand this Perfection in *Adam unfallen?* How elſe could his *Fall* bring on the Neceſſity of the Goſpel Redemption of a new Birth from above, of the *Word* and holy Spirit of God? For had he not had this Perfection of Nature, at firſt, his Redemption could not have conſiſted in the Revival of this Birth and Perfection in him. For had it been ſomething leſs than the Loſs of an angelic and heavenly Life, that had happened to him by his Fall, had it been only *ſome Evil*, that related to a Life of this World, nothing elſe but ſome *Remedy* from this World, could have been his Redemption. But ſince it is the Corner Stone of the Goſpel, that nothing leſs than the *eternal Word*, which was Man's Creator, could be his Redeemer, and that by a new Birth from above, it is a Demonſtration, that he was at firſt created an Angel, born from above, and ſuch a Partaker of the divine Life, as the Angels are, and that his Fall was a real Death or Extinction of his angelic Life.

But the Letter of *Moſes* is expreſs for this firſt Perfection of *Adam*. God ſaid, *Let us make Man in our own Image, after our Likeneſs*. How different is this from the Creation of the Animals of this World? What

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can you think, or say higher of an Angel? Or what Perfection can an Angel have, but that of being in the Image and after the Likeneſs of God? But now what an Abſurdity would it be, to hold, that *Adam* was created in the Image and Likeneſs of God, and yet had not in him, ſo much as the Image, and Likeneſs of an Angel? Again, was not Paradiſe loſt, was not *Evil* and the *Curſe* awakened in all the Elements, as ſoon as *Adam* fell? And does not this prove beyond all Contradiction, that *Adam* was created by God, as I ſaid above, to be the *reſtoring Angel*, to have Power over all the outward World, to keep all its Evil from being known, or felt, till the Fall of Angels from Heaven, had been repaired by a Race of angelic Men born on Earth. But how could he do, and be all this for which he was created by God, how could he keep up the Life of Heaven and Paradiſe in himſelf, and this new World, unleſs the Life of Heaven had been his own Life? Or how could he be the Father of an Offspring, that were to have no Evil, nor ſo much as the Knowledge of what was Good, and Evil, in this World? Could any Thing but a heavenly Man bring forth a heavenly Offspring? Or could he be ſaid to have the Life of this World opened in him in his Creation,

Creation, who was to bring forth a Race of Beings, inſenſible of the Good and Evil in this World? For every Thing that has the Life of this World opened in it, is under an abſolute Neceſſity of knowing, and feeling its Good, and Evil.

Secondly, That *Adam* when he firſt entred into the World, had the Nature and Perfection of an Angel, is further plain from *Moſes*, who tells us, that he was made at firſt both Male and Female in one Perſon, and that *Eve*, or the Female Part of him, was afterwards taken out of him. Now this Union of the Male and Female in him, was the *Purity*, or *Virgin Perfection* of his Life, and is the very Perfection of the angelic Nature. This we are aſſured of from our Lord himſelf, who in Anſwer to the Queſtion of the Sadducees, ſaid unto them, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures and the Power of God, for in the Reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels in Heaven* *. Or as in St. *Luke*, for they *are equal to the Angels of God.* Here we have a twofold Proof of the angelic Perfection of *Adam*. (1.) Becauſe we are told, that that State in which he was created, neither Male nor Female, but with both Na-

* Matth. xxii. 29, 30.

tures in his one Perſon, is the very Nature, and Perfection of the Angels of God in Heaven. (2.) Becauſe every one who ſhall have a Part in this Reſurrection, ſhall then have this angelick Perfection again, to be no more Male, or Female, or a Part of the Humanity, but ſuch perfect, compleat, undivided, Creatures, as the Angels of God are. But now, this Perfection could not belong to the Humanity after the Reſurection, but becauſe it belonged to the firſt Man before his Fall. For nothing will be reſtored, but that which was firſt loſt, nothing riſe again, but that which ſhould not have died, nor any Thing be united, but that which ſhould not have been parted. The ſhort is this. Man is *at laſt* to have a Nature equal to that of the Angels. This Equality conſiſts in this; that as they have, ſo the Humanity will have both Male and Female Nature in one Perſon.

But the Humanity was thus created at firſt, Male and Female in one Perſon, therefore the Humanity had at *firſt* a Nature, and Perfection equal to that of the Angels. Thus is the Letter of *Moſes* much more plain for the angelick Perfection of *Adam* in his Creation, than it is for the Reſurrection of the dead; and yet we have our Lord's Word for it, that *Moſes* ſufficiently proved the Reſurrection

rection of the Dead. What say you, *Academicus*, to this Matter?

Acad. I will here just mention what my good old *Tutor* says; The Author of the *Appeal*, says he, founds all his Scheme of Regeneration or Redemption on a supposed *threefold Life*, in which *Adam* was created. His sole Proof of this threefold Life is taken from this Text of *Moses*. *God breathed into Man the Breath of Lives, and Man became a living Soul.* From this Phrase, the *Breath of Lives*, the *Appeal* without any Authority from the Text, observes thus, *Here the highest, and most divine Original is not darkly, but openly, absolutely, and in the strongest Form of Expression ascribed to the Soul, &c.* a vain Assertion, says my Tutor, for the *Breath of Life* or Lives is used by *Moses* only as a Phrase for *animal Life.* This is plainly seen, *Gen.* vii. *ver.* 21. *and all Flesh dyed——all in whose Nostrils was the Breath of Lives.*

Behold, says he, the very Phrase, which the *Appeal* takes to be so full a Proof of the high Dignity, and threefold Life of God in the Soul, here made Use of to denote the Life of every kind of Animal—And therefore, says he, if this *Phrase* proves the Soul of *Adam* to be a *Mirrour of the holy*

Trinity, it proves the ſame of every Breath in the Noſtrils of every Creature.

Theoph. To make ſhort work, *Academicus*, with your Tutor's Confutation, as he thinks, of the capital Doctrine of the *Appeal*, I ſhall only quote the whole Period, as it ſtands in the *Appeal*. " *God breathed* in- " to him *the Breath of Lives*, (Spiraculum " vitarum) *and Man became a living Soul.* " Here, ſays the *Appeal*, the Notion of a " Soul created *out of Nothing*, is in the " plaineſt ſtrongeſt Manner rejected by the " firſt written Word of God, and no *Jew* " or *Chriſtian* can have the leaſt Excuſe for " falling into *ſuch* an Error ; here the *high-* " *eſt and moſt divine* Original is not darkly, " but openly, abſolutely aſcribed to the Soul. " It came forth as a Breath of Life, or lives " out of, and from the Mouth of God, and " therefore did not come out of the *Womb* " of *Nothing*, but is what it is, and has " what it has in itſelf, *from*, and *out of* " *the* firſt and higheſt of all Beings * ." Here *Academicus*, behold the Falſeneſs, and Weakneſs of your Tutor's Obſervation—The *Appeal*, you plainly ſee, proves only from the Text of *Moſes*, the high Original of the Soul, and only for this Reaſon, becauſe

* Appeal p. 2.

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it is the *Breath of God*, breathed into Man. The *Appeal* makes no Uſe of the Expreſſion, the *Breath of Lives*, takes no Notice of it, deduces nothing from it, but *ſolely* conſiders the *Act* of God, as *breathing* the Spirit of the Soul from himſelf; and from this *Act* of God, the high Birth and Dignity of the Soul is moſt juſtly affirmed. And the *Appeal* makes this Obſervation *ſolely* to prove, that the Soul is not created *out of Nothing*. This is the one, ſole, open, and declared Intent of the *Appeal* in all this Paragraph. But your Tutor overlooking all this, tho' nothing elſe is there, makes the Author of the *Appeal* to affirm the threefold Life of God in the Soul, merely from the Phraſe of the *Breath of Lives*, when there is not one ſingle Word about it. For the *Appeal* not only has not the leaſt Hint in this Place of any ſuch Matter to be proved from the *Breath of Lives*, but through the whole Book, there is not the ſmalleſt Regard paid to this Expreſſion, nor any Argument ever deduced from it. How ſtrange is all this in your good old Tutor!

The Matter is plainly this, the Author of the *Appeal* looks wholly to the *Action* of God, *breathing* his own Spirit into *Adam*, and from this breathing, he juſtly affirms

the *divine Nature* of the Soul, all his Argument is deduced from thence. Now if your Tutor, or any one else could shew, that God *breathed* his own Spirit into every Animal, and with this Intent, that it might come forth in his own Image and Likeness, then the Distinction, and high Birth of the Soul, pleaded for by the *Appeal*, would indeed be lost. But till then, the *Appeal* must, and therefore will for ever stand unconfuted in its Assertion of the Dignity, and divine Birth of the Soul.

Again, behold *Academicus*, a still farther Weakness chargeable upon your Tutor. You have seen, that his Reasoning upon the *Breath of Lives*, is meddling with something that the *Appeal* meddles not with, makes no Account of, but your Tutor has conjured it up for his own Use, and yet see what a poor Use he makes of it. He affirms that *Moses* uses only the *Breath of Lives*, as a Phrase for animal Life. How does he prove this? Why truly from this Reason, because *Moses* uses the same Phrase when he speaks of the Lives of all Animals.

Now does not every *English* Man know, that we make use of the same *four Letters* of the Alphabet, when we say the *Life* of a Man, the Life of a Beast, and the Life of a Plant?

Plant? That we uſe the ſame *five Letters* when we ſay the *Death* of a Man, the Death of a Beaſt, and the Death of a Plant? But will it thence follow, that the Life and Death of Men, and Beaſts, and Plants are of the ſame Nature and Degree, and have the ſame Good and Evil in them? Yet this is full as well, as to conclude that the Breath of Life in Man, and the Breath of Life in Animals, is of the ſame *Nature*, and *Degree*, has the ſame *Goodneſs* and *Excellency* in it, becauſe the ſame Words, made up of the ſame Letters, expreſs them both. Your Tutor therefore, *Academicus*, and not the Author of the *Appeal*, is the Perſon that reaſons weakly from the Phraſe of *the Breath of Lives*. For that Author never ſo much as offers to argue from it. His Proof of the threefold Life of God in the Soul, ſo far as it is deduced, from the Text of *Moſes*, lies wholly in this, that it is the Breath and Spirit of the triune God breathed forth from this triune Deity into Man. This ſure, is no ſmall Proof of its having the triune Nature of God in it. And this threefold Life of the Soul, thus plainly deducible from the Letter of *Moſes*, is ſhewn to be abſolutely certain from every chief *Doctrine* and Inſtitution, nay from the *whole Nature* of our Redemption; and all the Goſ-

pel is ſhewn to ſet its Seal to this great Truth, the *threefold Life* of God in the Soul. Nay every Thing in Nature, Fire, and Light, and Air, every Thing that we know of Angels, of Devils, of the animal Life of this World, is in the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt Manner from the Beginning to the End of the *Appeal*, made ſo many Proofs of the threefold Life of the triune God in the Soul. Thus ſays the *Appeal*, *No* Omnipotence *can make you a Partaker of the Life of this outward World, without having the Life of this outward World born in your own creaturely Being*; *the Fire and Light and* Air of this World muſt have their Birth in your own creaturely Being, or you cannot poſſibly live in, or have a Life from *outward Nature*. And therefore, no Omnipotence can make you a Partaker of the beatifick Life, or Preſence of the holy Trinity, unleſs that Life ſtands in the ſame triune State within you, as it does without you *. Again, ſearch to Eternity, ſays the *Appeal*, why no Devil, or Beaſt can poſſibly enter into Heaven, and there can only this *one Reaſon* be aſſigned for it, becauſe neither of them have the *triune* holy Life of God in them †. But enough of this Miſtake of your good old Tutor. *Ruſticus* will,

* Appeal p. 51. † p. 53.

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I am afraid, chide you, for being the Occaſion of this long Digreſſion from the Point we were ſpeaking to.

Ruſt. Truly Sir, I don't know what to make of theſe great Scholars, they ſeem to have more Love for the Shadow of an Objection, than for the moſt ſubſtantial Truths. I think I here ſee great Reaſon, why our Saviour choſe poor and illiterate Fiſhermen to be his Apoſtles. St. *Paul* was the only Man, that had ſome Learning, and he was a Perſecuter of Chriſt, till ſuch Time, as God made *as it were Scales* to fall from his Eyes—And then he became a powerful Apoſtle. But let us return to your Account of the firſt created Perfection of Man, and the Degree of his falling from it. It is one of the beſt Doctrines that I ever heard in my Life. It not only ſtirs up every Thing that is good, and makes me hate every Thing that is evil in me, but it gives ſo good a Senſe, ſo ſound a Meaning to every Myſtery of the Goſpel, that it makes every Thing our Saviour has done for us, and every Thing he requires of us, to be equally neceſſary, and beneficial to us. But ſuppoſe now, our Fall not to be a Change of Nature, not a *Death* to our firſt Life, but only a ſingle Sin, or Miſtake in the firſt Man, what a Difficulty is there in ſuppoſing ſo great a Scheme of Redemption

Redemption to ſet right a ſingle Miſtake in one ſingle Creature? Again, what could Man have to do with Angels, and Heaven, if he had not at his Creation had the Nature of Heaven and Angels in him? But pray Sir, begin again, juſt where you left off.

Theoph. I was indeed, *Ruſticus*, at that Time juſt going to ſay, that *Adam* had loſt much of his firſt Perfection before his *Eve* was taken out of him, which was done to prevent worſe Effects of his Fall, and to prepare a Means for his Recovery, when his Fall ſhould become total, as it afterwards was, upon the eating of the earthly Tree of Good and Evil.

It is not good that Man ſhould be alone, ſaith the Scripture; this ſhews, that *Adam* had altered his firſt State, had brought ſome *Beginning* of Evil into it, and had made *That* not to be good, which God ſaw to be good, when he created him. And therefore as a leſſer Evil, and to prevent a greater, God divided the firſt perfect human Nature into two Parts, into a Male and a Female Creature; and this, as you ſhall ſee by and by, was a wonderful Inſtance of the Love and Care of God towards this new Humanity. It was at firſt the total Humanity in one Creature, who ſhould in that State of Perfection have brought forth his own Likeneſs out of himſelf, in

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ſuch *Purity* of Love, and ſuch *divine Power*, as he himſelf was brought forth by God; the Manner of his own Birth from God, was the Manner that his own Offspring ſhould have had a Birth from him, all done by the pure Power of a divine Love. Man ſtood no longer in the Perfection of his firſt State, as a Birth of divine Love, than whilſt he loved himſelf *only* as God loved him, as in the *Image*, and *after the Likeneſs of God*. This *Purity* of Love, and Delight in the Image of God, would have carried on the Birth of the Humanity, in the ſame Manner, and by the ſame divine Power, as the firſt Man was brought forth. For it was only a Continuation of the ſame generating Love, that gave Birth to the firſt Man. But *Adam* turned away his Love from the divine Image, which he ſhould only have loved, and deſired to propagate out of himſelf. He gazed upon this outward World, and let in an adulterate Love into his Heart, which deſired to know the Life that was in this World. This impure Deſire brought the Nature of this World into him. His firſt Love, and divine Power had no Strength left in it, it was no longer a Power of bringing forth a divine Birth from himſelf. His firſt Virginity was loſt by an adulterate Love,

which had turned its Desire into this World. This State of *Inability*, is that which is called his falling into a deep Sleep. And in this Sleep, God divided this overcome Humanity into a Male and Female.

The first Step therefore towards the Redemption, or Recovery of Man *beginning* to fall, was the taking his *Eve* out of him, that so he might have a *second Trial* in Paradise, in which if he failed, another effectual Redeemer might arise out of the *Seed of the Woman*. Oh my Friends, what a wonderful Procedure is there to be seen in the divine Providence, turning all Evil, as soon as it appears, into a further Display, and opening of new Wonders of the Wisdom, and Love of God. Look back to the first Evil, which the Fall of Angels brought forth. The Darkness, Wrath and Fire of fallen Nature, was immediately taken from them, and turned into a new Creation; where those apostate Angels were to see all the Evil that they had raised in their Kingdom, turned against them, and made the Ground of a new Race of Beings, which were to possess those Thrones which they had lost. Look now at *Adam* brought into the World in such an angelic Nature, as he, and all his redeemed Sons will have, after the Resurrection; an

Angel

Angel at firſt, and an Angel at laſt, with Time, and Miſery, and Sin, and Death, and Hell, all of them felt, and all overcome, betwixt the two glorious Extremes. When this firſt human Angel, through a falſe, impure Love, loſt the divine Power of generating his own Likeneſs out of himſelf, God took Part of his Nature from him, that ſo the Eye of his Deſire, which was turned to the Life of this World, might be directed to that Part of his Nature, which was taken from him. And this is the Reaſon of my ſaying before, that this was choſen as a leſſer Evil, and to avoid a greater; for it was a leſſer Degree of falling from his firſt Perfection, to love the female Part of his own divided Nature, than to turn his Love towards that, which was ſo much lower than his own Nature. And thus, at *that Time*, *Eve* was a *Help*, that was truly and properly *meet* for him, ſince he had loſt his firſt Power of being himſelf the Parent of an angelic Offſpring, and ſtood with a longing Eye, looking towards the Life of this World.

But the moſt glorious Effect of this Diviſion into Male and Female is yet to come. For when *Adam* and *Eve* had joined in the eating of the Tree of Good, and Evil, and

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ſo were totally fallen from God, and Paradiſe, into the Miſery and Slavery of the beſtial Life of this World. When this greateſt of all Evils had thus happened to theſe two divided Parts of the Humanity, when all the Angel was loſt, and nothing but a ſhameful frighted Animal of this World, was to be ſeen in this divided Male and Female; then in, and by, and through this Diviſion, did God open, and eſtabliſh the glorious Scheme of an univerſal Redemption to theſe fallen Creatures, and all their Offspring, by the myſterious *Seed* of the *Woman*.

Had *Adam* ſtood in his firſt State of Perfection as a Birth of divine Love, and loving only the divine Image and Likeneſs in himſelf, this Love would have been itſelf the fruitful Parent of an holy Offspring; no *Eve* had been taken out of him, nor any Male, or Female ever known in human Nature. All his Poſterity had been in him ſecured, and the earthly Tree of Good and Evil had never been ſeen in Paradiſe. But tho' he loſt this firſt generating Power of divine Love, and ſtood as a barren Tree; yet ſeeing God's Purpoſe of raiſing an Offſpring from *Adam*, to poſſeſs the Thrones of fallen Angels muſt go on, and ſucceed, therefore

therefore that *Adam* might yet have an Offspring, God took from him, that which is call'd the Female Part of his Nature, that by this Means both a Posterity, and a Saviour might proceed from him. For through this Division of Man, God would in a wonderful Manner do *That*, which *Adam* should have done, before he was divided.

For out of this Female Part, and after the Fall, God would raise, without the Help of *Adam*, that same glorious angelick Man, which *Adam* should have brought forth before, and without his *Eve*, which glorious Man is therefore call'd the second *Adam*. 1. As having in his Humanity that very Perfection, which the first *Adam* had in his Creation. 2. Because he was to do all that for Mankind by a Birth of Redemption from him, which they should have had by a Birth from *Adam*, had he kept his first State of Perfection. What say you, *Academicus*, to all this?

Acad. Truly Sir, there seems to be so much Light, and Truth, and Scripture for all this Account that you have given of these Matters, as must even force one to consent to it. But then all our Systems of Divinity, to which learned Men are chain'd, are quite silent of these Matters. I never before heard of this

gradual

gradual Fall of *Adam*, nor this angelick State of his firſt Creation, and Power of bringing forth his own Offspring, and therefore can hardly believe it ſo ſtrongly, as I would, and as the Truth ſeems to demand of me.

Ruſt. Pray Sir, let me ſpeak to *Academicus*, he ſeems to be ſo hamper'd with Learning, that I can hardly be ſorry, that I am not a great Scholar.

Can any thing be more punctually related in Scripture, than the *gradual Fall* of *Adam?* Don't you ſee, that he was created firſt with both Natures in him.? Is it not expreſly told you, that *Eve* was not taken out of him, till ſuch Time as it was *not good* for him to be as he then *was*, and yet God ſaw that was good, when he created him. Is it not plain therefore, that he had fallen from the Goodneſs of his firſt Creation, and therefore his Fall was not at once, nor total till his eating of the earthly Tree. Again, as to his being an *Angel* at his firſt Creation, becauſe of both Natures in him; Is it not ſufficiently plain from his being to be an Angel of the ſame Nature at laſt, in the Reſurrection? For this is an Axiom that cannot be ſhaken, that *Nothing can riſe higher*, than its *firſt created Nature*; and therefore an Angel at laſt, muſt have been an Angel at firſt. Do you think

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it poſſible for an Ox in Tract of Time to be chang'd into a rational Philoſopher? Yet this is as poſſible, as for a Man that has only by his Creation the Life of this World in him, to be chang'd into an Angel of Heaven. The Life of this World can reach no farther than this World, no Omnipotence of God can carry it farther, and therefore if Man is to be an Angel at the laſt, and have the Life of Heaven in him, he muſt of all Neceſſity in his Creation, have been created an Angel, and had his Life kindled from Heaven. Becauſe no Creature can poſſibly have any other Life, or higher Degree of Life, than that which his Creation brought forth in him.

Theoph. Marvel not, *Academicus*, at that which has been ſaid of the firſt Power of *Adam*, to generate in a divine Manner an holy Offspring, by the Power of that divine Love which gave birth to himſelf; for he was born of that Love for no other End, than to multiply Births of it, and whilſt his Love continued to be one with that Love, which brought him into Being, nothing was impoſſible to it. For Love is the great Creating *Fiat* that brought forth every Thing, that is diſtinct from God, and is the only working Principle that ſtirs, and effects every Thing that is done in Nature and Creature. Love is the

Principle of Generation from the higheſt to the loweſt of Creatures, it is the firſt Beginning of every Seed of Life; every Thing has its Form from it; every Thing that is born, is born in the Likeneſs, and with the Fruitfulneſs of that ſame Love that generateth and beareth it, and this is its own Seed of Love within its ſelf, and is its Power of fructifying in its kind.

Love is the holy, heavenly, magic Power of the Deity, the firſt Fiat of God, and all Angels, and eternal Beings are the firſt Births of it. The Deity delights in beholding the ideal Images which riſe up and appear in the Mirror of his own eternal Wiſdom. This Delight becomes a loving Deſire to have living Creatures in the Form of theſe Ideas, and this loving Deſire is the generating, heavenly Parent out of which, Angels and all Eternal Beings are born. Every Birth in Nature is a Conſequence of this firſt prolifick Love of the Deity, and generates from that which began the firſt Birth. Hence it is, that through all the Scale of Beings, from the Top to the Bottom of Nature, Love is the one Principle of Generation of every Life, and every Thing generates from the ſame Principle, and by the ſame Power by which itſelf was generated. Marvel not therefore, my Friend, that *Adam* ſtanding in the Power of his firſt Birth, ſhould have a

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divine Power of bringing forth his own Likeneſs. But I muſt now tell you, that the greateſt Proof of this glorious Truth is yet to come. For I will ſhew you, that all the Goſpel bears Witneſs to that heavenly Birth, which we ſhould have had from *Adam* alone. —This Birth from *Adam* is ſtill the one Purpoſe of God, and muſt be the *one Way* of all thoſe that are to riſe with Chriſt, to an Equality with the Angels of God. All muſt be Children of *Adam*, for all that are born of Man and Woman, muſt lay aſide this polluted Birth, and be born again of a ſecond *Adam*, in that ſame Perfection of an holy angelick Nature, which they ſhould have had from the firſt *Adam* before his *Eve* was ſeparated from him. For it is an undeniable Truth of the Goſpel, that we are call'd to a new Birth, different in its whole Nature, from that which we have from Man and Woman, or there is no Salvation; and therefore it is certain from the Goſpel, that the Birth which we have from *Adam*, divided into Male and Female, is not the Birth that we ſhould have had, becauſe it is the one Reaſon, why we are under a Neceſſity of being born again of a Birth from a ſecond *Adam*, who is to generate us again in that Purity, and divine Power, in and by which we ſhould have been born of the firſt angelick *Adam*.

A divine Love in the firſt pure and holy *Adam*, united with the Love of God, willing him to be the Father of a holy Offspring, was to have given Birth to a Race of Creatures from him. But *Adam* fulfill'd not this purpoſe of God, he awaken'd in himſelf a falſe Love, and ſo all his Offspring were forc'd to be born of Man and Woman, and thereby to have ſuch impure Fleſh and Blood as cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Is not this Proof enough that this Birth is not the firſt Birth that we ſhould have had? Will any one ſay, how could *Adam* have ſuch a Power to bring forth a Birth in ſuch a *Spiritual* Way, and ſo contrary to the preſent State of Nature? The whole Nature of the Goſpel is a full Anſwer to this Queſtion. For are we not all to be born again in the *ſame Spiritual* Way, and are we not merely by a Spiritual Power, to have a Birth of heavenly Fleſh and Blood? The Strangeneſs of ſuch a Power in the firſt *Adam*, is only juſt ſo ſtrange, and hard to be believ'd, as the ſame Power in the ſecond *Adam*; and who is call'd the ſecond *Adam* for no other Reaſon, but becauſe he ſtands in the *Place* of the firſt, and is to do *That*, which the firſt ſhould have done. And therefore our having from him a new heavenly Fleſh and Blood rais'd in us

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by a *Spiritual Power*, ſuperior to the common Way of Birth in this World, is the ſtrongeſt of Proofs, that we ſhould have been born of *Adam* in the *ſame Spiritual* Power, and ſo contrary to the Birth of Animals into this World. For all that we have from the ſecond *Adam*, is a Proof that we ſhould have had the ſame from *Adam* the firſt.—A divine *Love* in *Adam* the firſt, was to have brought forth an holy Offspring. A divine *Faith* now takes its Place, in the ſecond Birth, and is to generate a new Birth from the ſecond *Adam*, is to eat his Fleſh and drink his Blood, by the ſame divine Power, by which we ſhould have had a Birth of the angelick Fleſh and Blood of our firſt Parent. Thus, *Academicus*, is this Birth from *Adam alone* no Whimſie, or Fiction, or fine ſpun Notion, but the very Birth that the Goſpel abſolutely requires, as the Subſtance of our Redemption. There is no Room to deny it, without denying the whole Nature of our Redemption. On the other Hand, the Birth that we have from *Adam* divided into *Male* and *Female*, is through all Scripture declar'd to be the Birth of *Miſery*, of *Shame*, of *Pollution*, of *Sinful* Fleſh and Blood; and is the only Ground and Reaſon, why we muſt be born again, of other Fleſh and Blood before we can enter

into the Kingdom of Heaven? This Truth therefore, that we was to have had a heavenly Birth from *Adam*, depends not upon this or that particular Text of Scripture, but is affirm'd by the whole Nature of our Redemption, and the whole Spirit of Scripture, repreſenting our Birth from this World as ſhameful as that of the wild Aſs's Colt, and calling for a new Birth from above, as abſolutely neceſſary, if Man is to have a Place amongſt the Angels of God. And therefore it may be affirm'd, that ſo ſure as it is from Scripture, that Chriſt is become our ſecond *Adam*, to help us to ſuch a Birth, ſo ſure is it from Scripture, that we ſhould have had the ſame Birth from our firſt Parent, who if not fallen, could have wanted no Redeemer of his Offſpring, and therefore muſt have brought forth that *ſame Birth*, which we have from Chriſt, but could not have from the Birth of Man and Woman. I muſt now only juſt mention to you a Paſſage much to the Matter in Hand, taken from the ſecond Epiſtle of St. *Clemens* a Biſhop of *Rome*, who liv'd in the very Time of the Apoſtles. He relates, that Chriſt being aſk'd, when his Kingdom ſhould come, gave this Anſwer. *When two Things ſhall become one, and that which is outward, be as that which is inward, the Male with*

with the Female, and neither Man nor Woman. There wants no Comment here, I ſhall only obſerve, that the Meaning of the Words, *When that which is outward ſhall be, as that which is inward*, ſeems plainly to be this, when the outward Life or Birth is come to be as the inward, angelick Life is, then the Birth will be one, the Male and Female in one, and then the Kingdom of God is come. Theſe Words were in the next Century quoted by *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, though with ſome Alteration. The ſame Author alſo relates another Anſwer given by our Lord to much the ſame Queſtion, put by *Salome*, where our Lord's Anſwer was thus. *When ye ſhall have put out or away the Garment of Shame, and Ignominy, and when two ſhall become one, the Male and the Female united, and neither Man nor Woman.* The Garment of Shame and Ignominy, is plainly that Cloathing of Fleſh and Blood, at the Sight of which both *Adam* and *Eve* were aſhamed.

Acad. I am fully ſatisfied, *Theophilus*, with the Account you have given of the firſt Perfection and divine State of our firſt Parent. And I think nothing can be plainer, than that we were to have been born of him to the ſame heavenly Birth, which

we now are to receive from Christ, our second *Adam*. But I must still say, that I am afraid, your Critical Adversaries, will here find some Pretence, to charge you with a Tendency at least to that Heresy, which held Marriage to be unlawful, since you here hold, that it came in by *Adam*'s falling from his first Perfection.

Theoph. I own, my Friend, that there is no knowing when one is safe from Men of that Stamp. But as for me, my Eye is only upon Truth, and wherever that leads, there I follow, they, if they please, may persecute it with Objections. Here is not the least Pretence for the Charge you speak of. For here is no more Condemnation of Marriage, as unlawful, than there is a Condemnation of God, for keeping up the State and Life of this World. The Continuation of the World, tho' fallen, is a glorious Proof and Instance of the Goodness of God, that so a Race of new born Angels may be brought forth in it. Happy therefore is it, that we have such a World as this to be born into, since we are only born, to be born again to the Life of Heaven. Now Marriage has the Nature of this fallen World, but it is God's appointed Means of raising the Seed of *Adam* to its full Number. Ho-

nourable therefore is Marriage in our fallen State, and happy is it, for Man to derive his Life from it, as it helps him to a Power of being eternally a Son of God.

Nor does this Original of Marriage caſt the ſmalleſt Reflection upon the *Sex*, as if they brought *all*, or *any* Impurity into the human Nature. No, by no Means. The Impurity lies in the *Diviſion*, and that which *cauſed it*, and not in either of the divided Parts. And the female Part has this Diſtinction, though not to boaſt of, yet to take Comfort in, that the Saviour of the World is called the *Seed of the Woman*, and had his Birth only from the female Part of our divided Nature. But *Ruſticus*, I ſee, wants to ſpeak.

Ruſt. indeed, Sir, I do. But it is only to obſerve to you, what a Syſtem of ſolid, harmonious and great Truths are here opened to our View, by this Conſideration of the firſt angelic State of *Adam*, and his falling from it into an earthly animal Life of this World. Created at firſt an human Angel, with a Hoſt of Angels in his Loins, and then falling from this State, with this particular Circumſtance, that he had not only undone himſelf, but had alſo involved an innocent, and almoſt numberleſs Poſterity in the ſame Miſery, who

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now muſt all be born of him in his fallen Condition. Thus looking at this Creation of ſo noble and high a Creature, and his Fall, as introducing ſo extenſive a Train of Miſery, how worthy of God, how becoming a Love, and Wiſdom that are infinite, does all the ſtupendous Myſtery of our Redemption appear? It was to reſtore an Angel, big with an angelic Offspring, an Angel that God had created to carry on the great Work of this new Creation, to bring Time with all its Conqueſts back into Eternity, an Angel in whom, and with whom, were fallen an innocent, numberleſs Poſterity, that had not yet began to breathe.

What a Senſe, and Reaſonableneſs does this State of Things give to all thoſe Paſſages of Scripture, which bring a God incarnate from Heaven, to remedy this ſad Scene of Miſery that was opened on Earth! What leſs than God, could awaken again the dead angelic Life? What leſs than God's entring into the human Birth itſelf, and becoming one of it, and with it, could generate again the Life of God in every human Birth? The *Scripture* ſaith, *God ſo loved the World——God ſpared not his only Son——Chriſt laid down his Life for us*, &c. How glorious a Senſe is there in all theſe Sayings,

Sayings, when it is conſidered, that all this was done, for ſo high and divine a Creature, created by God for ſuch great Ends, and full of a Poſterity, that was to have filled a Heaven reſtored? In this Light, every Part of our Redemption gives a Glory, a Wiſdom, and Goodneſs to God, which far ſurpaſſes every other View, we can poſſibly take of them. Whereas if you leſſen this angelic Dignity of the firſt Man, if you ſuppoſe his Fall to be leſs, than that of falling with all his Poſterity, from an angelic Life, into the earthly, animal Life of this World, Slaves to Sin and Miſery; all the Fabrick of our Redemption is full of ſuch Wonders, as can only be wondered at. Thus, if you conſider this World, and Man its higheſt Inhabitant made out of nothing, and with only the Breath of this earthly Life breathed into his Noſtrils; what is there to call for this great Redemption from Heaven?

Again, if you conſider the Fall of Man only as a *ſingle Act* of Diſobedience to a poſitive, arbitrary Command of God, this is to make all the Conſequences of his Fall unexplicable. For had the firſt Sin been only a *ſingle Act* of Diſobedience, it had been more worthy of Pardon, than any other Sin, merely becauſe it was the firſt, and by a

Creature that had as yet no Experience. But to make the firſt ſingle Act of Diſobedience not only *unpardonable*, but the Cauſe of ſuch a Curſe and Variety of Miſery entailed upon all his Poſterity from the Beginning to the End of Time; and to ſuppoſe that ſo much Wrath was raiſed in God, at this ſingle Act of Diſobedience, that nothing could make an Atonement for it, but the ſtupendous Myſtery of the Birth, Sufferings, and Death of the Son of God, is yet farther impoſſible to be accounted for. In this Caſe, the ſuppoſed Wrath and Goodneſs of God are equally unexplicable —— And from hence alone have ſprung up the deteſtable Doctrines about the Guilt and Imputation of the firſt Sin, and the ſeveral Sorts of partial, abſolute Elections and Reprobations of ſome to eternal Happineſs, and others to be Fire-Brands of Hell to all Eternity. Deteſtable may they well be called, ſince if *Lucifer* could truly ſay, that God from all Eternity determined, and created him to be that wicked helliſh Creature that he is, he might then add, not unto him, but unto his Creator, muſt all his Wickedneſs be aſcribed. How innocent, how tolerable is the Error of Tranſubſtantiation, when compared with this abſolute Election, and Reprobation? It

indeed

indeed cannot be reconciled to our Senſes and Reaſon, but then it leaves God, and Heaven poſſeſſed of all that is holy and good; but this Reprobation-Doctrine not only overlooks all Senſe and Reaſon, but confounds Heaven and Hell, takes all Goodneſs from the Deity, and leaves us nothing to deteſt in the Sinner, but God's eternal irreſiſtible Contrivance to make him to be ſuch.

But now, when we take this Matter of the Creation, and Fall of Man, as Truth, and Fact, and Scripture plainly repreſent it, every Thing that can awaken in ourſelves, a Love and Deſire to be like unto God, is to be found in it. Whilſt Man ſtood in his firſt Perfection, unturned from God, this World was under his Feet, Paradiſe was the Element in which he lived; the *Spirit* of God was his Life, the *Son of* God was his Light, he was in the World, as much above it, and with as full Diſtinction from it, as uncapable of being hurt by it, as an Angel, that only comes with a divine Commiſſion into it. The whole World was a Gift, put into his Hands, the Standing or Fall of it, was left to him; as his Will and Mind ſhould *work*, ſo ſhould either Paradiſe, or a curſed Earth overcome. God, by this new Creation, had

ſo

so altered the wrathful State of *Lucifer*'s fallen Kingdom, that the Evil that had been raised in it, was hid and overcome by the Good. It was thus created, and put into this new State for this sole End, that an human Angel might keep Paradise alive, and bring forth a paradisiacal Host of Angels, in the very Place, where the fallen Angels had brought forth their Evil. But all these great Things depended upon *Adam*'s conforming to the Designs of God, and living in this World in such a State, as God had created him in. He could not conform to the Designs of God any other Way, than by the *Rectitude* of his *Will*, willing that which God willed both in the Creation of him, and the World.

Whilst his Will stood thus inclined, the new Creation was preserved, himself was an Angel, and the World a Paradise. No Evil would have been known either in Plant, or Fruit, or Animal, nor could have been known but by the *declining Will* and Desire of Man calling it forth. His first longing Look toward the Knowledge of the Life of this World, was the first loosing of the Reins of Evil——It began to have Life, and a Power of stirring, as soon as he cast his Desire into it. Hence from his Desire,

turned

turned to the Knowledge of the Good and Evil in this World, the *Curſe* in the Earth got a *Power* of giving forth an *evil* Tree, whoſe Fruit was the Key to the Knowledge of Good and Evil, a Tree which could not have grown, had he willed nothing, but that which God willed in the Creation of him.

He was not the Creator of this bad Tree, no more than he was the Creator of the good Trees that grew in Paradiſe. But as the *Rectitude* of his Will *kept up* the heavenly Powers of Paradiſe in the Earth; ſo the *Declenſion* of his good Will, opened a Paſſage for the Evil that was hid in the Earth, to bring forth a Tree in its own Likeneſs. The Earth had a natural Power of bringing forth a Tree of its own Nature, and Paradiſe was that heavenly Power which hindred it from bringing forth ſuch Productions: But when the Keeper of Paradiſe turn'd a Wiſh from God, and Paradiſe, after a bad Knowledge; then Paradiſe loſt ſome of its Power, and the Curſe in the Earth could give forth a bad Tree. But ſee now the Goodneſs and Compaſſion of God towards this miſtaken Creature; for no ſooner had *Adam* by the Abuſe of his Power, and Freedom given occaſion to the Birth of this Evil Tree,

but

but the God of Love informs him of the dreadful Nature of it, commands him not to eat of it, assuring him that Death was hid in it, that Death to his angelick Life would be found in the Day that he should eat of it. A plain Proof, if any Thing can be plain, that this Tree came not from God, was not according to his Will, and Purpose, but from a Power in the Earth, which could not shew itself, till the strong Will and Desire of *Adam* desir'd to taste something, that was not Paradisiacal. But pray *Theophilus*, do you now speak again.

Theoph. The short of the Matter then, my Friend, is this. Neither *Adam*, nor any other Creature has at its *Creation*, or Entrance into Life, any *Arbitrary Trial* impos'd upon it by God. The *natural* State of every intelligent Creature, it is *one only* Trial, and it cannot sin, but by departing from that Nature, or falling from that State in which it was created. *Adam* was created an human Angel in Paradise, and he had no *other Trial* but this, whether he would live in Paradise, as an Angel of God, insensible of the Life, or the Good and Evil of this earthly World. This was the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Death, that must stand before him, and the Necessity of his chusing either the one or the other,

other, was a Neceſſity founded in his own happy Nature.

The true Account therefore of the Fall of *Adam*, is a *gradual* Declenſion, or Tendency of his Will from the Life of Paradiſe into the Life of this World, till he was at laſt wholly fallen into it, and ſwallowed up by it. The firſt Beginning of his Luſt towards this World, was the firſt Beginning of his Fall, or Departure from the Life of Heaven, and Paradiſe; and his eating of the earthly Tree was his laſt and finiſhing Step of his Entrance into and under the full Power of this World. This was the true Nature of his Fall. On the other hand, all that we ſee on the Part of God, is a *gradual* Help, adminiſtred by God to this falling Creature, ſuitable to every Degree of his falling, till at laſt, in the Fulneſs of his Fall, an univerſal Redeemer of him and his Poſterity, was given by a ſecond *Adam*, to regenerate again the whole Seed of *Adam* the firſt.

Thus, the firſt Degree of his Luſt towards this World, had ſome Stop put to it, by the taking his *Eve* out of him, that ſo, his Deſire into the Life of this World, might be in ſome Meaſure leſſen'd. When his Luſt into this World ſtill went on, and gave occaſion to the Birth of the evil Tree, a ſuitable Re-

medy was here given by God; for God laid a Prohibition upon it, and declar'd the Death that must be receiv'd from it. When he was further so overcome by his lusting Desire, as to eat of the Tree, that had the Nature of this World in it, and so lost his first Life, and angelick Cloathing, then God, even then all Goodness, and Mercy to him, only told him of the *Curse* and *Misery* that was open'd in Nature; that himself and posterity must be sweating, labouring Animals in a fallen Word, till their sickly, shameful, naked new gotten Bodies, mix'd and mouldred in the Corruption of that Earth, whose Fruits they had chosen to know, instead of those of Paradise.

Now all this is nothing of a *Penalty wrathfully* inflicted by God, but was the *natural State* of *Adam*, as soon as his own Lust had led him out of a heavenly Paradise, into the earthly Life of this World. God brings no Misery upon him, but only shews the Misery that he had open'd in himself, by not keeping to the State in which he was created. And no sooner had God inform'd this miserable Pair of the State, they had brought upon themselves, but in that Moment, his eternal Love begins a Covenant of Redemption that was to begin in them, and in and through them

them extend itſelf to all their Poſterity. A Beginning of a new Birth, call'd the *Seed of the Woman*, was like the firſt Breath of Life, *breathed*, or *inſpoken* again into the Light of their Life, which as an *Immanuel*, or *God* with *them*, ſhould be born in all their Poſterity, and be their Power of becoming again ſuch Sons of God, as ſhould fulfil the firſt Deſigns of the Creation of *Adam*, and fill Heaven again with that Hoſt of Angels, which it had loſt. Thus from the Creation of *Adam*, through all the Degrees of his Fall, to the Myſtery of his Redemption, every Thing tells you, that God is Love. Nay the very Poſſibility of his having ſo great a Fall, gives great Glory to the Goodneſs, and Love of God towards him. He was created an Angel, and therefore had the higheſt Perfection of an Angel, which is a *Freedom* of Willing. 2dly, He was created to be the *reſtoring* Angel, of this new Creation. Now theſe two Things, which were his higheſt Glory, and greateſt Marks of the divine Favour, were the only *Poſſibility* of his Falling. Had he not had an angelick Freedom of Will, he could not have had a falſe Will; had he not had *all Power* given unto him, over this World, he could not have fallen into it; it was this divine, and high Power over

it, that open'd a Way for his Entrance, or falling into it.——Thus, *Academicus*, from this View of Man, we come to the utmoſt Certainty of a threefold Nature, or Life in him. 1. He is the Son of a fallen Angel. 2. He is the Son of a Male and Female of this beſtial World. 3. He is a Son of the Lamb of God, and has a Birth of Heaven again in his Soul. Hence we ſee alſo, that all that we have to fear, to hate, and renounce, all that we have to love, to deſire and pray for, is *all within* our ſelves. No Man can be Miſerable but by falling a Sacrifice to his own inward Paſſions, and Tempers; nor any one Happy, but by overcoming himſelf. How ridiculous would a Man ſeem to you, who ſhould torment himſelf becauſe the Land in *America* was not well till'd? Now every Thing that is not within you, that has not its Birth, and Growth in your own Life, is at the ſame Diſtance from you, is as foreign to your own Happineſs, or Miſery, as an *American* Story. Your Life is all that you have, and nothing is a Part of it, or makes any Alteration in it, but the Good, or Evil, that is in the Workings of your own Life. Hence you may ſee, why our Saviour, who tho' he had all Wiſdom, and came to be the Light of the World, is yet ſo ſhort in his Inſtructi-

ons,

ons, and gives so small a Number of Doctrines to Mankind, whilst every moral Teacher writes Volumes upon every single Virtue. It is because he knew, what they knew not, that our whole Malady lies in this, that the *Will* of our Mind, the *Lust* of our Life is turn'd into this World. And that nothing can relieve us, or set us right, but the *turning* the Will of our Mind, and the Desire of our Hearts to God, and that Heaven, which we had lost. And hence it is, that he calls us to Nothing, but a *total Denial* of our selves, and the *Life* of this World, and to a Faith in him, as the Worker of a new Birth and Life in us. Did we but receive his short Instructions with true Faith, and Simplicity of Heart, as the Truth of God, we should not want any one to comment, or enlarge upon them. A Traveller that has taken a wrong Road, does not want an Orator to discourse to him, on the Nature of Roads, but to be told, in short, which is his right Way. Now this is our Case, it was not a Number of Things that brought about our Fall, *Adam* only took up a *wrong Will*, that brought him and us into our present State, or *Road of Life*; and therefore our Saviour uses not a Number of Instructions, to set us right, he only tells us to renounce the *false Will*, which

brought *Adam* into the *Life* of this World, and to take up that Will, which ſhould have kept him in Paradiſe. Obſerve now, my Friend, the great Benefit that we have from the foregoing Account of Man's original Perfection, and the Nature of his Fall. It opens the true Ground of our Religion, and the abſolute Neceſſity of it; it forces us to know that our whole natural Life is a miſtaken Road, and that Chriſt is alone our true Guide out of it. It teaches us every Reaſon for renouncing our ſelves, and loving the whole Nature of our Redemption, as the greateſt Joy and Deſire of our Hearts. We are not only compell'd, as it were, to hunger after it, to run with Eagerneſs into its Arms, but are alſo deliver'd from all Miſtakes about it, from all the Difficulties, and Perplexities, which divided Sects, and Churches have brought into it. For from this View of Things, we ſee, not uncertainly, but with the fulleſt Aſſurance that our *Will* and our *Heart* is all, that nothing elſe either finds, or loſes God, and that all our Religion, is only the Religion of the Heart. We ſee with open Eyes, that as a *Spirit of Longing* after the Life of this World, made *Adam*, and us to be the poor Pilgrims on Earth, that we are, ſo the *Spirit of Prayer* or the longing Deſire of the Heart

Heart after Chriſt, and God, and Heaven, breaks all our Bonds aſunder, caſts all our Cords from us, and raiſes us out of the Miſeries of Time into the Riches of Eternity. Thus ſeeing and knowing our firſt, and our preſent State, every Thing calls us to Prayer; and the Deſire of our Heart becomes the Spirit of Prayer. And when the Spirit of Prayer is born in us, then Prayer is no longer conſider'd, as only the Buſineſs of this, or that Hour, but is the continual Panting, or Breathing of the Heart after God. Its Petitions are not pick'd out of Manuals of Devotion, it loves its own Language, it ſpeaks moſt when it ſays leaſt. If you aſk what its Words are, they are *Spirit*, they are *Life*, they are *Love*, that unite with God.

Acad. I apprehend, Sir, that what you here ſay of the Spirit of Prayer, will be taken by ſome People for a Cenſure upon *Hours*, and *Forms* of Prayer. Tho' I know you have no ſuch Meaning.

Ruſt. Pray let me ſpeak again to *Academicus*, his Learning ſeems to be always upon the Watch, to find out ſome Excuſe for not receiving the whole Truth. Does not *Theophilus* here ſpeak of the *Spirit of Prayer* as a *State* of the Heart, which is become the *governing* Principle of the Soul's Life? And if

it is a living State of the Heart, muſt it not have its Life in itſelf, independent of every outward Time, and Occaſion? And yet muſt it not, at the ſame Time, be that alone which diſpoſſes, and fits the Heart to rejoice, and delight in Hours, and Times, and Occaſions of Prayer? Suppoſe he had ſaid, that *Honeſty* is an *inward living* Principle of the Heart, a Rectitude of the Mind, that has all its Life and Strength *within* itſelf. Could this be thought to cenſure all Times and Occaſions of performing outward Acts of Honeſty? Now the *Spirit* of Prayer differs from all outward Acts, and Forms of Prayer, juſt as the *Honeſty of the Heart*, or a living Rectitude of Mind differs from outward, and occaſional Acts of Honeſty. And yet ſhould a Man overlook, or diſregard Times and Occaſions of outward Acts of Honeſty, on Pretence that true Honeſty was an inward living Principle of the Heart, who would not ſee, that ſuch a one, had as little of the inward Spirit, as the outward Acts of Honeſty? St. *John* ſaith, *If any Man hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother hath need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion to him, How dwelleth the Love of God in him?* Juſt ſo, and with the ſame Truth it may be ſaid, if a Man overlooketh, neglecteth, or refuſeth Times and

Hours

Hours of Prayer, *how dwelleth the Spirit of Prayer* in him? And yet its own Life and Spirit is vaſtly Superior to, independent on, and ſtays for no particular Hours, or Forms of Words. And in this Senſe it is truly ſaid, that it has its own Language, that it wants not to pick Words out of Manuals of Devotion, but is always ſpeaking forth, Spirit, and Life, and Love towards God. But pray *Theophilus*, do you go on, as you intended.

Theoph. I ſhall only add, before we paſs on to another Point, that from what has been ſaid of the firſt State, and Fall of Man, it plainly follows, that the *Sin* of all Sins, or the *Hereſy* of all Hereſies, is a *worldly Spirit*. We are apt to conſider this Temper only as an Infirmity, or pardonable Failure, but it is indeed the great *Apoſtacy* from God, and the divine Life. It is not a ſingle Sin, but the whole Nature of all Sin, that leaves no Poſſibility of coming out of our fallen State, till it be totally renounc'd with all the Strength of our Hearts. Every Sin, be it of what Kind it will, is only a Branch of the worldly Spirit, that lives in us. *There is but one that is good*, ſaith our Lord, and *that is God*. In the ſame Strictneſs of Expreſſion it muſt be ſaid, there is but *one Life*, that is good, and that is the Life of God, and Heaven. Depart in the leaſt

leaſt Degree from the Goodneſs of God, and you depart into Evil, becauſe nothing is good but his Goodneſs.

Chuſe any Life, but the Life of God, and Heaven, and you chuſe Death; for Death is nothing elſe but the Loſs of the Life of God. The Creatures of this World have but *one Life*, and that is the Life of this World: This is their *one Life*, and *one Good*. Eternal Beings have but one *Life*, and *one Good*, and that is the Life of God. The Spirit of the Soul is in itſelf nothing elſe but a Spirit breathed forth from the Life of God, and for this only End, that the Life of God, the Nature of God, the Working of God, the Tempers of God might be manifeſted in it. God could not create Man to have a Will of his own, and a Life of his own, different from the Life and Will that is in himſelf; this is more impoſſible, than for a good Tree to bring forth corrupt Fruit. God can only delight in his own Life, his own Goodneſs, and his own Perfections, and therefore cannot love or delight, or dwell in any Creatures, but where his own Goodneſs, and Perfections are to be found. Like can only unite with Like, Heaven with Heaven, and Hell with Hell, and therefore the Life of God muſt be the Life of the Soul, if the Soul is to unite with God.

Hence

Hence it is, that all the Religion of fallen Man, all the Methods of our Redemption have only this *one End*, to take from us that *ſtrange* and *earthly* Life, we have gotten by the Fall, and to kindle again the Life of God, and Heaven in our Souls. Not to deliver us from that groſs and ſordid Vice call'd *Covetouſneſs*, which Heathens can condemn, but to take the *whole Spirit* of this World entirely from us, and that for this neceſſary Reaſon, becauſe all *that is in the World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father*, that is, is not that Life, or Spirit of Life which we had from God by our Creation, *but is of this World*, is brought into us by our Fall from God into the Life of this World. And therefore a worldly Spirit is not to be conſider'd as a *ſingle* Sin, or as ſomething that may conſiſt with ſome real Degrees of Chriſtian Goodneſs, but as a State of *real Death* to the Kingdom, and Life of God in our Souls. Management, Prudence, or an artful Trimming betwixt God and Mammon are here all in vain, it is not only the Groſſneſs of an outward, viſible, worldly Behaviour, but the *Spirit*, the *Prudence*, the *Subtlety*, the *Wiſdom* of this World, that is our *Separation* from the Life of God.

Hold

Hold this therefore, *Academicus*, as a certain Truth, that the *Hereſy* of all Hereſies is a *worldly Spirit*. It is the whole Nature, and Miſery of our Fall, it keeps up the Death of our Souls, and ſo long as it laſts, makes it impoſſible for us to be born again from above. It is the greateſt Blindneſs, and Darkneſs of our Nature, and keeps us in the groſſeſt Ignorance both of Heaven and Hell. For tho' they are both of them within us, yet we feel neither the one nor the other, ſo long as the Spirit of this World reigns in us. Light, and Truth, and the Goſpel, ſo far as they concern Eternity, are all empty Sounds to the worldly Spirit. His own Good, and his own Evil govern all his Hopes, and Fears, and therefore he can have no Religion, or be farther concern'd in it, than ſo far as it can be made ſerviceable to the Life of this World. *Publicans* and *Harlots* are all born of the Spirit of this World, but its higheſt Births are the *Scribes*, the *Phariſees* and *Hypocrites*, who turn Godlineſs into Gain, and ſerve God for the ſake of Mammon; theſe live and move and have their Being in and from the Spirit of this World.——Of all Things therefore, my Friend, deteſt the Spirit of this World, or there is no Help, you muſt live and dye an *utter Stranger* to all that is divine and heavenly.

heavenly. You will go out of the World in the ſame Poverty and Death to the divine Life, in which you enter'd into it. For a worldly, earthly Spirit can know Nothing of God, it can know Nothing, feel Nothing, taſte Nothing, delight in Nothing, but with earthly Senſes and after an earthly Manner. *The natural Man*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Fooliſhneſs unto him. He cannot know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*, that is, they can only be diſcern'd by *that Spirit*, which he hath not. Now the true *Ground* and *Reaſon* of this, and the abſolute Impoſſibility for the natural Man, how polite, and learned, and acute ſoever he be, is this, it is becauſe all *real* Knowledge, is *Life*, or a living *Senſibility* of the Thing that is known. There is no Light in the Mind, but what is the Light of *Life*; ſo far as our Life reaches, ſo far we underſtand, and *feel*, and know, and no farther. All after this, is only the Play of our Imagination, amuſing itſelf with the *dead Pictures* of its own Ideas. Now this is all, that the natural Man, who hath not the Life of God in him, can poſſibly do with the Things of God. He can only contemplate them, as Things *foreign* to himſelf, as ſo many *dead Ideas*, that he receives from

Books, or Hearſay, and ſo can learnedly diſpute, and quarrel about them, and laugh at thoſe as Enthuſiaſts, who have a living Senſibility of them. He is only the worſe for his *hearſay, dead Ideas* of divine Truths, they become a bad Nouriſhment of all his natural Tempers: He is proud of his Ability to diſcourſe about them, and loſes all Humility, all Love of God and Man, through a vain and haughty Contention for them. His *Zeal* for Religion is Envy and Wrath, his *Orthodoxy* is Pride and Obſtinacy, his *Love* of the Truth is Hatred and Ill-Will to thoſe, who dare to diſſent from him. This is the conſtant Effect of the Religion of the natural Man, who is under the Dominion of the Spirit of this World. He cannot know more of Religion, nor make a better Uſe of his Knowledge, than this comes to; and all for this plain Reaſon, becauſe he ſtands at the *ſame Diſtance* from a *living Senſibility* of the Truth, as the Man that is born blind does from a *living Senſibility* of Light. Light muſt firſt be the *Birth* of his own Life, before he can enter into a *real* Knowledge of it. Yet ſo ignorant is the natural Man with all his learned Acuteneſs, that he does not ſo much as know, that there is, and muſt be this great *Difference* between real Knowledge,

and dead Ideas of Things, and that a Man cannot know any Thing any further, than as his *own Life* opens the Knowledge of it in himſelf.

The Meaſure of our Life, is the Meaſure of our Knowledge, and as the Spirit of our Life worketh, ſo the Spirit of our Underſtanding conceiveth. If our Will worketh with God, tho' our natural Capacity be ever ſo mean and narrow, we get a real Knowledge of God, and heavenly Truths, for every Thing muſt feel that, in which it lives.

But if our Will worketh with Satan, and the Spirit of this World, let our Parts be ever ſo bright, our Imaginations ever ſo ſoaring, yet all our living Knowledge, or real Senſibility can go no higher, or deeper, than the *Myſteries* of Iniquity, and the *Luſts* of Fleſh and Blood. For where our Life is, there, and there only is our Underſtanding, and that for this plain Reaſon, becauſe as Life is the *Beginning* of all Senſibility, ſo it is, and muſt be the *Bounds* of it; and no Senſibility can go any further than the Life goes, or have any other *Manner* of Knowledge, than as the Manner of its Life is. If you aſk what *Life* is, or what is to be underſtood by it? It is in itſelf nothing elſe but a *working Will*, and no Life could be either Good, or Evil,

Evil, but for this Reaſon, becauſe it is a *working Will:* Every Life from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Animal, conſiſts in a working Will, and therefore as the Will worketh, as that is with which it uniteth, ſo hath every Creature its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of Life; and conſequently as the Will of its Life worketh, ſo it hath its *Degree*, and *Kind*, and *Manner* of conceiving, and underſtanding, of Liking and Diſliking. For nothing feels, or taſtes, or underſtands, or likes or diſlikes, but the Life that is in us. The Spirit that leads our Life, is the Spirit that forms our Underſtanding. The Mind is our Eye, and all the Faculties of the Mind ſee every Thing according to the State the Mind is in. If *ſelfiſh Pride* is the Spirit of our Life, every Thing is only ſeen and felt, and known through this Glaſs. Every Thing is dark, ſenſeleſs, and abſurd to the proud Man, but that which brings Food to this Spirit. He underſtands Nothing, he feels Nothing, he taſtes Nothing, but as his Pride is made *ſenſible* of it, or capable of being *affected* with it. His *working Will*, which is the Life of his Soul, liveth and worketh only in the Element of Pride, and therefore what ſuits his Pride, is his *only Good*, and what contradicts his Pride, is *all* the Evil that he

he can feel, or know. His Wit, his Parts, his Learning, his Advancement, his Friends, his Admirers, his Succeſſes, his Conqueſts, all theſe are the *only* God and Heaven, that he has any *living* Senſibility of. He indeed can talk of a Scripture God, a Scripture Chriſt, and Heaven, but theſe are only the ornamental Furniture of his Brain, whilſt Pride is the God of his Heart. We are told, that *God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.* This is not to be underſtood, as if God by an *arbitrary Will*, only choſe to deal thus with the proud and humble Man. Oh no. The true Ground is this, The *Reſiſtance* is on the Part of Man. Pride reſiſteth God, it rejecteth him, it turneth from him, and chuſeth to worſhip and adore ſomething elſe inſtead of him. Whereas Humility leaveth all for God, falls down before him, and opens all the Doors of the Heart, for his Entrance into it. This is the only Senſe, in which God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble. And thus it is in the true Ground, and Reaſon of every Good, and Evil that riſes up in us; we have neither Good nor Evil, but as it is the *natural* Effect of the *Workings* of our own Will, either with or againſt God, and God only interpoſes with his Threatnings, and Inſtructions, to *direct*

us to a right Use of our Wills, that we may not blindly work ourselves into Death, instead of Life. But take now another Instance like that already mention'd. Look at a Man, whose *working Will* is under the Power of *Wrath*. He sees, and hears, and feels, and understands, and talks wholly from the *Light*, and *Sense* of Wrath. All his Faculties are only so many Faculties of Wrath, and he knows of no Sense or Reason, but that which his enlightened Wrath discovers to him. I have appeal'd, *Academicus*, to these Instances, only to illustrate, and confirm that great Truth, which I before asserted, namely, that the *working of our Will*, or the State of our Life governs the *State* of our Mind, and forms the *Degree*, and *Manner* of our Understanding and Knowledge. And that as the *Fire* of our Life burns, so is the *Light* of our Life kindled. And all this only to shew you, the utter *Impossibility* of knowing God, and divine Truths till your Life is divine, and wholly dead to the Life, and Spirit of this World. Since our Light and Knowledge can be no better, or higher, than the State of our Life and Heart is. Tell me now, do you feel the Truth of all this? I say feel, because no Truth is possess'd, till you have a feeling, and living Sensibility of it.

Acad.

Acad. Oh Sir, you have touched every String of my Heart, and I now wiſh with the Pſalmiſt, that I had the Wings of a Dove, that I might flee away, and be at Reſt, flee away from the Spirit of this World, to be at Reſt in the ſweet Tranquillity of a Life, born again of God. You know, Sir, that in the Morning you told me of a certain *firſt Step*, that of all Neceſſity muſt be the *Beginning* of a ſpiritual Life, you gave me till to-morrow, to ſpeak my Mind, and Reſolution about it. But your have now extorted my Anſwer from me, I cannot ſtay a Moment longer. With all the Strength that I have, I turn from every Thing, that is not God, and his holy Will; with all the Deſire, Delight, and Longing of my Heart, I give up myſelf wholly to the Life, Light, and holy Spirit of God. Pleas'd with nothing in this World, but as it gives Time, and Place, and Occaſions of doing, and being *that*, which my heavenly Father would have me to do, and be. Seeking for no Happineſs from this earthly fallen Life, but that of overcoming all its Spirit, and Tempers. But I believe, *Theophilus*, that you had ſomething farther to ſay.

Theoph. Indeed, *Academicus*, there is hardly any knowing, when one has ſaid enough of the evil Effects of a worldly Spirit. It is

the Canker that eateth up all the Fruits of our other good Tempers, it leaves no Degree of Goodneſs in them, but transforms all that we are, and do, into its own earthly Nature. The Philoſopers of old, began all their Virtue in a total Renunciation of the Spirit of this World. They ſaw with the Eyes of Heaven, that Darkneſs was not more contrary to Light, than the Wiſdom of this World was contrary to the Spirit of Virtue; therefore they allow'd of no Progreſs in Virtue, but ſo far as a Man had overcome himſelf, and the Spirit of this World.

This gave a divine Solidity to all their Inſtructions, and prov'd them to be Maſters of true Wiſdom. But the Doctrine of the Croſs of Chriſt, the laſt, the higheſt, the moſt finiſhing Stroke given to the Spirit of this World, that ſpeaks more in *one Word*, than all the Philoſophy of voluminous Writers, is yet profeſs'd by thoſe, who are in more Friendſhip with the World, than was allow'd to the Diſciples of *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, or *Epictetus*.

Nay, if thoſe antient Sages were to ſtart up amongſt us with their divine Wiſdom, they would bid fair to be treated by the Sons of the Goſpel, if not by ſome Fathers of the Church, as dreaming Enthuſiaſts.

But

But *Academicus*, this is a ſtanding Truth, the World can only love its own, and Wiſdom can only be juſtify'd of her Children. The Heaven-born *Epictetus* told one of his Scholars, that *then* he might *firſt* look upon himſelf as having made *ſome true* Proficiency in Virtue, when the World took him for a *Fool*; an Oracle like that, which ſaid, the *Wiſdom of this World is Fooliſhneſs with God.*

If you was to aſk me, what is the Apoſtacy of theſe laſt Times, or whence is all the Degeneracy of the preſent Chriſtian Church, I ſhould place it all in a *worldly Spirit.* If here you ſee open Wickedneſs, there only Forms of Godlineſs, if here ſuperficial Holineſs, political Piety, crafty Prudence, there haughty Sanctity, partial Zeal, envious Orthodoxy, if almoſt every where you ſee a Jewiſh Blindneſs, and Hardneſs of Heart, and the Church trading with the Goſpel, as viſibly, as the old Jews bought and ſold Beaſts in their Temple, all this is only ſo many Forms, and proper Fruits of the worldly Spirit. This is the great *Net*, with which the Devil becomes a Fiſher of Men; and be aſſur'd of this, my Friend, that every Son of Man is in this *Net*, till through, and by the Spirit of Chriſt, he breaks out of it.

I say the *Spirit* of Christ, for nothing else can deliver him from it. Trust now to any Kind, or Form of Religious Observances, to any Number of the most plausible Virtues, to any Kinds of Learning, or Efforts of human Prudence, and then I will tell you what your Case will be, you will overcome *one* Temper of the World, *only* and *merely* by cleaving to another. For Nothing leaves the World, Nothing renounces it, Nothing can possibly overcome it, but singly and solely the Spirit of Christ. Hence it is, that many learned Men with all the rich Furniture of their Brain, live and die Slaves to the Spirit of this World, and can only differ from gross Worldlings, as the Scribes and Pharisees differ from Publicans and Sinners, it is because the Spirit of Christ is not the *one only* Thing, that is the *Desire* of their Hearts, and therefore their Learning only works in and with the Spirit of this World, and becomes it self no small Part of the *Vanity of Vanities*. Would you farther know, *Academicus*, the evil Nature and Effects of a worldly Spirit, you need only look at the blessed Power and Effects of the *Spirit of Prayer*, for the one goes downwards with the same Strength, as the other goes upwards; the one betroths, and weds you to an earthly Nature, with the same Certainty, as the

the other eſpouſes, and unites you to Chriſt, and God, and Heaven. The Spirit of Prayer, is a preſſing forth of the Soul out of this earthly Life, it is a ſtretching with all its Deſire after the Life of God, it is a leaving, as far as it can, all its *own Spirit*, to receive a Spirit from above, to be one Life, one Love, one Spirit with Chriſt in God. This Prayer which is an emptying itſelf of all its own Luſts, and natural Tempers, and an opening it ſelf for the Light and Love of God to enter into it, is the Prayer in the *Name* of Chriſt, to which nothing is deny'd. For the Love which God bears to the Soul, his eternal, never ceaſing Deſire to enter into it, to dwell in it, and open the Birth of his holy Word, and Spirit in it, ſtays no longer than till the Door of the Heart opens for him. For nothing does, or can keep God out of the Soul, or hinder his holy Union with it, but the *Deſire* of the Heart turn'd from him. And the Reaſon of it is this, it is becauſe the *Life* of the Soul is in itſelf nothing elſe but a *working Will*, and therefore wherever the Will worketh, or goeth, there and there only the Soul liveth, whether it be in God, or the Creature.

Whatever it deſireth, that is the *Fewel* of its Fire, and as its Fewel is, ſo is the Flame of its Life. A Will given up to earthly

Goods, is at Graſs with *Nebuchadnezzar*, and has one Life with the Beaſts of the Field. For earthly Deſires keep up the ſame Life in a Man, and an Ox. For the one only Reaſon, why the Animals of this World have no Senſe, or Knowledge of God, is this, it is becauſe they cannot form any other than earthly Deſires, and ſo can only have an earthly Life. When therefore a Man wholly turneth his working Will to earthly Deſires, he dies to the Excellency of his natural State, and may be ſaid only to live and move, and have his Being in the Life of this World, as the Beaſts have.—Earthly Food, &c. only deſir'd, and us'd for the Support of the earthly Body, is ſuitable to Man's preſent Condition, and the Order of Nature; but when the Deſire, the Delight, and Longing of the Soul, is ſet upon earthly Things, then the Humanity is degraded, is fallen from God; and the Life of the Soul is made as earthly and beſtial, as the Life of the Body. For the Creature can be neither higher, nor lower, neither better nor worſe, than as the Will worketh. For you are to obſerve, that the Will hath a divine and *magick* Power, what it deſireth, that it taketh, and of that it *eateth* and *liveth*. Wherever and in whatever the *working* Will chuſeth to *dwell* and *delight*,

delight, that becometh the Soul's *Food*, its *Condition*, its *Body*, its *Cloathing*, and *Habitation*. For all these are the true and certain Effects, and Powers of the working Will.

Nothing doth, or can go with a Man into Heaven, nothing followeth him into Hell, but that in which the Will dwelt, with which it was fed, nouriſh'd, and cloath'd, in this Life. And this is to be noted well, that Death can make no Alteration of this State of the Will, it only takes off the outward, worldly Covering of Fleſh and Blood, and forces the Soul to ſee, and feel, and know what a Life, what a State, *Food*, *Body*, and *Habitation*, its own working Will has brought forth for it. Oh *Academicus*, ſtop a while, and let your Hearing be turn'd into Feeling. Tell me is there any Thing in Life, that deſerves a Thought but how to keep this *working* of our Will in a right State, and to get that *Purity* of Heart, which alone can ſee, and know and find, and poſſeſs God? Is there any Thing ſo frightful, as this worldly Spirit, which turns the Soul from God, makes it a Houſe of Darkneſs, and feeds it with the Food of Time, at the Expence of all the Riches of Eternity?

On the other Hand, what can be ſo deſirable a Good as the *Spirit of Prayer*, which empties

empties the Soul of all its own Evil, ſeparates Death and Darkneſs from it, leaves *Self*, *Time*, and the *World*, and becomes one Life, one Light, one Love, one Spirit with Chriſt, and God, and Heaven.

Think, my Friends, of theſe Things, with ſomething more than Thoughts, let your hungry Souls eat of the Nouriſhment of them, as a Bread of Heaven; and deſire only to live, that with all the *working* of your Wills, and the *whole Spirit* of your Minds, you may live and die united to God. And thus, let this Converſation end, till God gives us another Meeting.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

THE

THE

THIRD DIALOGUE.

Ruſt. I Have brought again with me, Gentlemen, my ſilent Friend *Humanus*, and upon the ſame Condition of being ſilent ſtill. But tho' his Silence is the ſame, yet he is quite alter'd. For this twenty Years I have known him to be of an even, chearful Temper, full of good Nature, and even quite calm and diſpaſſionate in his Attacks upon Chriſtianity; never provok'd by what was ſaid either againſt his Infidelity, or in Defence of the Goſpel. He us'd to boaſt of his being free from thoſe four Paſſions, and Reſentments which, he ſaid, were ſo eaſy to be ſeen in many, or moſt Defenders of the Goſpel-Meekneſs. But now he is moroſe, peeviſh, and full of Chagreen, and ſeems to be as uneaſy with himſelf, as with every Body elſe; whatever he ſays, is raſh, ſatirical, and wrathful. I tell him, but he wont own it, that his Caſe is this. The Truth has touch'd him, but it is only ſo far, as to be his *Tormenter*. It is only as welcome to him, as a *Thief* that has taken from him all his Riches, Goods, and Armour, wherein he truſted. The Chriſtianity he us'd to oppoſe is vaniſh'd, and

and therefore all the Weapons he had againſt it, are dropt out of his Hands. It now appears to ſtand upon another Ground, to have a deeper Bottom and better Nature, than what he imagin'd, and therefore he, and his Scheme of Infidelity are quite diſconcerted. But though his *Arguments* have thus loſt all their Strength, yet his *Heart* is left in the State it was, it ſtands in the ſame Oppoſition to Chriſtianity, as it did before, and yet without any Ideas of his Brain to ſupport it. And this is the true Ground of his preſent, uneaſy, peeviſh ſtate of Mind. He has nothing now to ſubſiſt upon, but the reſolute *Hardneſs* of his Heart, his *Pride*, and *Obſtinacy*. Theſe he cannot give up by the Force of his Reaſon, his Heart cannot bear the Thoughts of ſuch a Sacrifice, and yet he feels and knows, that he has no Strength left, but in a ſettled Hardneſs, Pride and Obſtinacy to continue as he is.——Theſe, I own, are ſevere, and hard Words, but hard as they are, I am ſure *Humanus* knows, that they proceed from the Softneſs, and Affection of my Heart toward him, from a compaſſionate Zeal to ſhew him where his Malady lies, and the Neceſſity of overcoming himſelf, before he can have the Bleſſing of Light, and Truth, and Peace. Tho' it is with ſome Reluctance, yet I have

choſen

choſen thus to make my Neighbour known both to himſelf, and to you, that you may ſpeak of ſuch Matters, as may give the beſt Relief to the State he is in.

Theoph. Indeed *Ruſticus*, I much approve of the Spirit, you have here ſhewn, with Regard to your Friend, and hope he will take in good Part, all that you have ſaid. As for me, I embrace him with the utmoſt Tenderneſs of Affection. I feel and compaſſionate the trying State of his Heart, and have only this one Wiſh, that I could pour the heavenly Water of Meekneſs, and the Oil of divine Love into it. Let us force him to know, that we are the Meſſengers of divine Love to him, that we ſeek not ourſelves, nor our own Victory, but to make him victorious over his own Evil, and become poſſeſt of a new Life in God. His Trial is the greateſt and hardeſt that belongs to human Nature. And yet it is abſolutely neceſſary to be undergone.

Nature muſt become a Torment and Burthen to it ſelf, before it can willingly give it ſelf up to that Death, through which alone it can paſs into Life. There is no true and real *Converſion*, whether it be from Infidelity, or any other Life of Sin, till a Man comes to know, and feel, that nothing leſs than his

whole Nature is to be parted with, and yet finds in himſelf no *Poſſibility* of doing it. This is the Inability, that can bring us at laſt to ſay with the Apoſtle, *when I am weak, then I am ſtrong*. This is the Diſtreſs, that ſtands near to the Gate of Life, this is the Deſpair, by which we loſe all our own Life, to find a new one in God. For here, in this Place it is, that *Faith*, and *Hope*, and true Seeking to God, and Chriſt are born.——But till all is Deſpair in ourſelves, till all is loſt, that we had any Truſt in, as our own, till then, Faith and Hope, and Turning to God in Prayer, are only Things learnt, and practis'd by *Rule* and *Method*, but they are not born in us, are not *living* Qualities of the new Birth; till we have done feeling any Truſt, or Confidence in our ſelves. Happy therefore is it for your Friend *Humanus*, that he is come thus far, that every thing is taken from him, on which he truſted, and found Content in himſelf. In this State, one *Sigh*, or *Look*, or the leaſt *Turning* of his Heart to God for Help, would be the Beginning of his Salvation. Let us therefore try to improve this happy Moment to him, not ſo much by Arguments of Reaſon, as by the Arrows of that divine Love, which overflows all Nature, and Creature.

For *Humanus*, tho' hitherto without Chriſt, is ſtill within the Reach of divine Love: He belongs to God, God created him for himſelf, to be an Habitation of his own Life, Light and holy Spirit, and God has brought him and us together, that the loſt Sheep may be found, and brought back to its heavenly Shepherd.

Oh *Humanus*, Love is my *Bait*, you muſt be caught by it, it will put its Hook into your Heart, and force you to know, that of all ſtrong Things, nothing is ſo ſtrong, ſo irreſiſtible as divine Love.

It brought forth all the Creation, it kindles all the Life of Heaven, it is the Song of all the Angels of God. It has redeemed all the World, it ſeeks for every Sinner upon Earth, it embraces all the Enemies of God, and from the Beginning to the End of Time, the one Work of Providence, is the one Work of Love.

Moſes and the Prophets, Chriſt and his Apoſtles were all of them Meſſengers of divine Love. They came to kindle a Fire on Earth, and that Fire was the Love which burns in Heaven. Aſk what God is? His Name is Love, he is the Good, the Perfection, the Peace, the Joy, the Glory and Bleſſing of every Life. Aſk what Chriſt is? He

is

is the universal Remedy of all Evil broke forth in Nature and Creature, he is the Destruction of Misery, Sin, Darkness, Death, and Hell. He is the Resurrection and Life of all fallen Nature. He is the unwearied Compassion, the long-suffering Pity, the never-ceasing Mercifulness of God to every Want, and Infirmity of human Nature.

He is the Breathing forth of the Heart, Life, and Spirit of God into all the dead Race of *Adam*. He is the Seeker, the Finder, the Restorer of all that was lost, and dead to the Life of God. He is the Love, that from *Cain* to the end of Time, prays for all its Murderers, the Love that willingly suffers and dies among Thieves, that Thieves may have a Life with him in Paradise. The Love that visits Publicans, Harlots, and Sinners, that wants, and seeks to forgive, where most is to be forgiven.

Oh, my Friends, let us surround and encompass *Humanus*, with these Flames of Love, till he cannot make his Escape from them, but must become a willing Victim to their Power. For the universal God is universal Love, all is Love, but that which is hellish and earthly. All Religion is the Spirit of Love, all its Gifts and Graces are the Gifts and Graces of Love, it has no

Breath,

Breath, no Life, but the Life of Love. Nothing exalts, nothing purifies, but the Fire of Love, nothing changes Death into Life, Earth into Heaven, Men into Angels, but Love alone. Love breathes the *Spirit* of God, its Words and Works are the *Inſpiration* of God. It ſpeaketh not of itſelf, but the *Word*, the eternal Word of God ſpeaketh in it; for all that Love ſpeaketh, that God ſpeaketh, becauſe Love is God. Love is Heaven reveal'd in the Soul, it is Light, and Truth, it is infallible, it has no Errors, for all Errors are the Want of Love. Love has no more of Pride, than Light has of Darkneſs, it ſtands and bears all its Fruits from a Depth, and Root of Humility. Love is of no Sect or Party, it neither makes, nor admits of any Bounds, you may as eaſily encloſe the Light, or ſhut up the Air of the World into one Place, as confine Love to a Sect or Party. It lives in the *Liberty*, the *Univerſality*, the *Impartiality* of Heaven. It believes in one, holy, Catholick God, the God of all Spirits, it unites and joins with the Catholick Spirit of the one God, who unites with all that is good, and is meek, patient, well-wiſhing, and long-ſuffering over all the Evil that is in Nature, and Creature. Love, like the Spirit of God rideth upon the Wings

of the Wind, and is in Union, and Communion with all the Saints that are in Heaven and on Earth. Love is quite pure, it hath no By-ends, it ſeeks not its own, it has but *one Will*, and that is, to give itſelf into every Thing, and overcome all Evil with Good. Laſtly, Love is the *Chriſt* of God, it cometh down from Heaven, it regenerateth the Soul from above, it blotteth out all Tranſgreſſions, it taketh from Death its Sting, from the Devil his Power, and from the Serpent his Poiſon. It healeth all the Infirmities of our earthly Birth, it gives Eyes to the Blind, Ears to the Deaf, and makes the Dumb to ſpeak; it cleanſes the Lepers, and caſts out Devils, and puts Man in Paradiſe before he dies. It liveth wholly to the Will of him, of whom it is born, its Meat and Drink is, to do the Will of God. It is the Reſurrection and Life of every divine Virtue, a fruitfull Mother of true Humility, boundleſs Benevolence, unwearied Patience, and Bowels of Compaſſion. This, *Ruſticus*, is the Chriſt, the Salvation, the Religion of divine Love, the true Church of God, where the Life of God is found, and lived, and to which your Friend *Humanus* is called by us. We direct him to nothing but the inward Life of Chriſt, to the Working of the holy Spirit of God, which

which alone can deliver him from the Evil that is in his own Nature, and give him a Power to become a Son of God.

Ruſt. My Neighbour has infinite Reaſon to thank you, for this lovely Draught you have given of the Spirit of Religion; he cannot avoid being affected with it. But pray let us now hear, how we are to enter into this Religion of divine Love, or rather what God has done to introduce us into it, and make us Partakers again of his divine Nature.

Theoph. The firſt Work, or Beginning of this redeeming Love of God, is in that *Immanuel*, or God with us, given to the firſt *Adam*, as the *Seed of the Woman*, which in him, and all his Poſterity, ſhould bruiſe the Head, and overcome the Life of the Serpent in our fallen Nature. This is Love indeed, becauſe it is univerſal, and reaches every Branch of the human Tree, from the firſt to the laſt Man, that grows from it. Miſerably as Mankind are divided, and all at War with one another, every one *appropriating* God to themſelves, yet they all have but one God, who is the Spirit of all, the Life of all, and the Lover of all. Men may divide themſelves, to have God to themſelves, they may hate and perſecute one another for God's ſake; but this is a bleſſed Truth, that neither the Hater, nor

the Hated can be divided from the one, holy, catholick God, who with an unalterable Meekneſs, Sweetneſs, Patience, and Good-Will towards all, waits for all, calls them all, redeems them all, and comprehends all, in the outſtretch'd Arms of his catholick Love. Aſk not therefore, how we ſhall enter into this Religion of Love, and Salvation, for it is it ſelf enter'd into us, it has taken Poſſeſſion of us from the Beginning. It is *Immanuel* in every human Soul, it lies as a Treaſure of Heaven, and Eternity in us; it cannot be divided from us by the Power of Man, we cannot loſe it ourſelves, it will never leave us, nor forſake us, till with our laſt Breath we die in the Refuſal of it. This is the open Gate of our Redemption, we have not far to go to find it. It is every Man's own Treaſure, it is a Root of Heaven, a Seed of God, ſown into our Souls by the *Word* of God, and like a ſmall Grain of Muſtard-Seed, has a Power of growing to be a Tree of Life. Here, my Friend, you ſhould once for all, mark and obſerve, *where* and *what* the true Nature of Religion is, for here it is plainly ſhewn you, that its *Place* is within, its Work and Effect is *within*, its Glory, its Life, its Perfection is all within; it is merely and ſolely the raiſing a new Life, new Love, and a new

new Birth in the inward Spirit of our Hearts. Religion, (which is ſolely to reſtore Man to his firſt and right State in God) had its Beginning, and firſt Power from the *Seed of the Woman*, the Treader on the Serpent's Head, and therefore all its Progreſs from its Beginning to its laſt finiſh'd Work, is, and can be nothing elſe, but the growing Power and Victory of the *Seed of the Woman*, over all the Evil brought by the Serpent into human Nature. For the Seed of the Woman, is the Spirit, and Power, and Life of God, given, or breathed again into Man, to be the Raiſer and Redeemer of that firſt Life, which he had loſt. This was the *ſpiritual* Nature of Religion in its firſt Beginning, and this alone is its *whole Nature* to the End of Time; it is nothing elſe, but the Power, and Life and Spirit of God, as *Father*, *Son*, and *holy Spirit*, working, creating, and reviving Life in the fallen Soul, and driving all its Evil out of it. This is the true Rock, on which the Church of Chriſt is built, this is the *one Church*, out of which there is no Salvation, and againſt which the Gates of Hell can never prevail.

Here therefore we are come to this firm Concluſion, that let Religion have ever ſo many *Shapes*, *Forms*, or *Reformations*, it is no true divine *Service*, no proper *Worſhip* of

God, has no Good in it, can do no Good to Man, can remove no Evil out of him, raiſe no divine Life in him, but ſo far as it *ſerves*, *worſhips*, *conforms*, and *gives* itſelf up to this *Operation* of the holy, triune God, as living and dwelling in the Soul. Keep cloſe to this Idea of Religion, as an inward, ſpiritual Life in the Soul, obſerve all its Works within you, the Death and Life that are found there; ſeek for no Good, no Comfort, but in the inward awakening of all that is holy and heavenly in your Heart, and then, ſo much as you have of this inward Religion, ſo much you have of a real Salvation. For Salvation is only a Victory over Nature, ſo far as you reſiſt and renounce your own vain, ſelfiſh, and earthly Nature, ſo far as you overcome all your own natural Tempers of the old Man, ſo far God enters into you, lives, and operates in you; he is in you the Light, the Life, and the Spirit of your Soul, and you are in him that new Creature, that worſhips him in Spirit and in Truth. For divine Worſhip, or Service is, and can be only perform'd, by being *like minded* with Chriſt, nothing worſhips God, but the Spirit of Chriſt his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed. This is as true, as that *no Man hath known the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son*

Son revealeth him. Look now at any Thing as Religion, or divine Service, but a ſtrict, unerring Conformity to the Life, and Spirit of Chriſt, and then tho' every Day was full of Burnt-offerings, and Sacrifices, yet you would be only like thoſe Religioniſts, who *drew near to God with their Lips, but their Hearts were far from him.*

For the Heart is always far from God, unleſs the Spirit of Chriſt be alive in it. But no one has the living Spirit of Chriſt, but he who in all his Converſation walketh, as he walked. Conſider theſe Words of the Apoſtle, *My little Children, of whom I travel in Birth, till Chriſt be formed in you.* This is the Sum total of all, and if this is wanting all is wanting. Again, ſays he, *He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly.—Circumciſion is nothing, and Uncircumciſion is nothing, but the new Creature,* is all. Nay ſee how much farther he carries this Point, in the following Words, *Tho' I ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, tho' I have the Gift of Prophecy, tho' I have all Faith, ſo that I could remove Mountains,* &c. *and have not Charity* (that is, have not the Spirit of Chriſt) *it profiteth me nothing.* For by *Charity* here, the Apoſtle means neither more nor leſs, but ſtrictly that ſame Thing, which, in other

Places, he calls the *new Creature*, *Christ formed* in us, and our being led by the Spirit of Christ. According to the Apostle, nothing availeth but the *new Creature*, nothing availeth but the Spirit of Charity here described; therefore this Charity, and the new Creature, are only two different Expressions of *one* and the *same* Thing, viz. the *Birth* and *Formation* of Christ in us. *He is none of his*, nay tho' he could say of himself (as our Lord says many will) have I not prophesy'd in the Name of Christ, cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works, yet such a one, not being *led by the Spirit of Christ*, is that very Man, whose high State, the Apostle makes to be a mere Nothing, because he hath not that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit of Christ. Again, *There is no Condemnation to those, who are in Christ Jesus*, therefore to be in Christ Jesus, is to have that Spirit of Charity, which is the Spirit, and Life, and Goodness of all Virtues. Now here you are to observe, that the Apostle no more rejects *all outward* Religion, when he says *Circumcision is nothing*, than he rejects *Prophesying*, and *Faith*, and *Alms-giving*, when he says they *profit nothing*; he only teaches this solid Truth, that the Kingdom of God is within us, and that it all consists in the State

of

of our Heart, and that therefore all outward Obſervances, all the moſt ſpecious Virtues, profit nothing, are of no Value, unleſs the hidden Man of the Heart, the new Creature, led by the Spirit of Chriſt be the Doer of them.

Thus, ſays he, *They who are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* And therefore none elſe, be they who, or where, or what they will, Clergy, or Laity, none are, or can be Sons of God, but they who give up themſelves entirely to the Leading and Guidance of the Spirit of God, deſiring to be mov'd, inſpir'd and govern'd ſolely by it.

Again, *We are of the Circumciſion, who worſhip God in Spirit*; and to ſhew that this is not a vain Pretence, he ſays in another Place, the *Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to Profit withall.* Therefore *no Profit* from any Thing elſe, all Preaching and Hearing is vain, and all Preachers and Hearers ſtand chargeable with the Vanity of their religious Performances, who think of Preaching, or Hearing *profitably*, any other Way, or by any other Power, than in and by the holy Spirit of God dwelling and working in them. Thus again, *If the Spirit of him, who raiſed Jeſus from the Dead, dwell in you, he alſo ſhall quicken your mortal Bo-*

dies by his Spirit, which dwelleth in you. In vain therefore is Life expected, either for Body or Soul, but by the holy Spirit dwelling in them. Again, *Through him we both have Access by one Spirit to the Father*; therefore this *one Spirit* is the one only Way to God, and Salvation. Thus does all Scripture bring us to this Conclusion, that all Religion is but a dead Work, unless it be the Work of the Spirit of God, and that Sacraments, Prayers, Singing, Preaching, Hearing, are only so many Ways of being fervent in the Spirit, and of giving up ourselves more and more to the inward working, enlightning, quickening, sanctifying Spirit of God within us; and all for this End, that the *Fall* may be taken from us, that Death may be swallowed up in Victory, and a true, real, Christ-like Nature formed in us, by the same Spirit, by which it was formed in the holy Virgin *Mary*. Now for the true Ground, and absolute Necessity of thus turning wholely and solely to the Spirit of God, you need only know this plain Truth; namely, that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Satan, or the Spirit of this World, are and must be, the one or the other of them, the *continual* Leader, Guide, and Inspirer of every Thing that lives in Nature. There is no going out from some one of

these;

theſe; the Moment you ceaſe to be mov'd, quicken'd, and inſpir'd by God, you are infallibly moving and directed by the Spirit of Satan, or the World, or by both of them. And the Reaſon is, becauſe the Soul of Man is a *Spirit* and a *Life*, that in its whole Being is nothing elſe but a *Birth* both of God and Nature, and therefore every Moment of its Life, it muſt live in ſome Union and Conjunction either with the Spirit of God governing Nature, or with the Spirit of Nature fallen from God, and working in its ſelf. As Creatures therefore, we are under an abſolute Neceſſity of being under the Motion, Guidance, and Inſpiration of ſome Spirit, that is more and greater than our own. All that is put in our own Power, is only the Choice of our *Leader*, but led and mov'd we muſt be, and by that Spirit, to which we give up ourſelves, whether it be, to the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of fallen Nature. To ſeek therefore to be always under the Inſpiration and Guidance of God's holy Spirit, and to act by an immediate Power from it, is not proud Enthuſiaſm, but as ſober and humble a Thought, as ſuitable to our State, as to think of renouncing the World, and the Devil. For they never are, or can be renounc'd by us, but ſo far as the Spirit of God is living, breathing,

breathing, and moving in us. And that for this plain Reaſon, becauſe nothing is contrary to the Spirit of Satan and the World, nothing works, or can work contrary to it, but the Spirit of Heaven.

Hence our Lord ſaid, *He that is not with me is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth*; plainly declaring, that not to be with him and led by his Spirit, is to be led by the Spirit of Satan, and the World. Aſk now, what Hell is? It is Nature deſtitute of the Light and Spirit of God, and full only of its own Darkneſs, nothing elſe can make it to be Hell. Aſk what Heaven is? It is Nature quicken'd, enlighten'd, bleſſed, and glorify'd by the Light and Spirit of *God* dwelling in it. What Poſſibility therefore can there be, of our dividing from Hell, or parting with all that is helliſh in us, but by having the Life, Light, and Spirit of God living, and working in us. And here again, my Friends, you may ſee in the greateſt Clearneſs, why nothing is available, nothing is Salvation, but the new Birth of a Chriſt-like Nature; it is becauſe every Thing elſe but this Birth, and Life of the Spirit, is only the Spirit of Satan, or the Spirit of this World. Have you any Thing to object to theſe Things?

Acad.

Acad. Truly Sir, all Objections are over with me; you have taken from me every Difficulty, or Perplexity that I had, either about Religion, or the Providence of God. I can now look back into the firſt Origin of Things with Satisfaction, I have ſeen how the World and Man began to be, in a Way highly worthy of the divine Wiſdom, and how they both came into their preſent Condition, and how they both are to riſe out of it, and return back to their firſt State in a glorious Eternity. It now appears to me with the utmoſt Clearneſs, that to look for Salvation in any Thing elſe, but the Light of God *within* us, the Spirit of God working *in us*, the Birth of Chriſt *really* brought forth *in us*, is to be as carnally minded, as ignorant of God, and Man, and Salvation, as the Jews were, when their Hearts were wholly ſet upon the Glory of their *Temple-ſervice* and a temporal Saviour to defend it, by a temporal Power. For every Thing but the Light and Spirit of God bringing forth a Birth of Chriſt in the Soul, every Thing elſe, be it what it will, has and can have no more of Salvation in it, than a temporal, fighting Saviour. For what is ſaid of the Impoſſibility of the Blood of Bulls and of Goats to take away Sins, muſt with the ſame Truth be ſaid of all other outward, creaturely Things,

they

they are all at the same Distance from being the Salvation of the Soul, and in the same Degree of Inability to take away Sins, as the Blood of Bulls, and Goats.

And all this for this plain Reason, because the Soul is a Spirit breath'd forth from God himself, which therefore cannot be blessed but by having the Life of God in it, and nothing can bring the Life of God into it, but only the Light, and Spirit of God. Upon this Ground I stand in the utmost Certainty, looking wholly to the Light and Spirit of God for an inward Redemption from all the inward Evil that is in my fallen Nature. All that I now want to know is this, what I am to do, to procure this continual Operation of the Spirit of God within me. For I seem to my self, not to know this enough; and I am also afraid of certain Delusions, which I have heard many have fallen into, under Pretences of being led by the Spirit of God. Pray therefore, *Theophilus*, give me some Instructions on this Head.

Rust. Pray Gentlemen, let an unlearned Man speak a Word here. Suppose, *Academicus*, you had a longing, earnest Desire to be govern'd by a *Spirit* of *Plainness* and *Sincerity* in your whole Conversation. Would this put you upon asking for *Art*, and *Rules*, and *Methods*,

Methods, or consulting some learned Man, or Book, to direct you, and keep you from Delusion? Would you not know and feel in yourself, that your own earnest Desire, and Love of Sincerity and Plainness, and your own inward Aversion to every Thing that was contrary to it, must be the one only possible Way of attaining it, and that you must have it in that Degree, as you lov'd, and lik'd to act by it? Now there is no more of *Art*, or any *Secret* requir'd to bring, and keep you under the Direction of the Spirit of God, than under the Spirit of Plainness, and Sincerity. The longing earnest Desire of the Heart, brings you into the safe Possession of the one, as it does of the other. For it has been enough prov'd, that the *Spirit of Prayer* forms the Spirit of our Lives, and every Man lives as the Spirit of Prayer leads him. Nay every Prayer for the holy Spirit, is the Spirit itself praying in you. For nothing can turn to God, desire to be united to him, and govern'd by him, but the Spirit of God. The Impossibility of praying for the Spirit of God in vain, is thus shewn by our blessed Lord, *If ye being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father, give the holy Spirit, to those that ask for it.* But I here stop.

Acad. I don't know how to understand, what *Rusticus* has said. For do not all good Christians daily pray for the Spirit of God, yet how few are led by it? Pray *Theophilus*, do you speak here.

Theoph. People may be daily at the Service of the Church, and read long Prayers at home, in which are many Petitions for the holy Spirit, and yet live and die, led and govern'd by the Spirit of the World. Because all these Prayers, whether we hear them read by others, or read them ourselves, may be done in Compliance only to Duties, Rules, and Forms of Religion, as Things we are taught not to neglect, but being only done thus, they are not the true, real working of the Spirit of the Heart, nor make any real Alteration in it. But you are to observe, that *Rusticus* spoke of the *Spirit of Prayer*, which is the Heart's own Prayer, and which has all the Strength of the Heart in it. And this is the Prayer, that must be affirm'd to be *always* effectual, it never returns empty, it eats and drinks that, after which it hungreth, and thirsteth, and nothing can possibly hinder it from having that, which it prays for. This we are assur'd of from these Words of Truth itself; *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* But this

this Bleſſedneſs could not belong to Hungering, if the truly hungry and thirſty could ever be ſent empty away. Every Spirit neceſſarily reaps that which it ſoweth, it cannot poſſibly be otherwiſe, it is the unalterable Procedure of Nature. Spirit is the firſt Power of Nature, every Thing proceeds from it, is born of it, yields to it and is govern'd by it. If the Spirit ſoweth to the Fleſh, it reapeth that Corruption which belongs to the Fleſh, if it ſoweth to the Spirit, it reapeth the Fruits of the Spirit, which are eternal Life. *The Spirit of Prayer* therefore is the Opener of all that is good within us, and the Receiver of all that is good without us, it unites with God, is one Power with him, it works with him, and drives all that is not God, out of the Soul. The Soul is no longer a Slave to its natural Impurity, and Corruption, no longer impriſon'd in its own Death and Darkneſs, but till the Fire from Heaven, the Spirit of Prayer is kindled in it.

Then begins the Reſurrection and the Life, and all that which died in *Adam*, comes to life in Chriſt. Aſk not therefore, *Academicus*, what you are to do, to obtain the Spirit of God, to live in it, and be led by it; for your Power of having it, and your Meaſure of receiving it, are juſt according to that Faith,

and Earneſtneſs with which you deſire to be led by it. For the hungry Spirit of Prayer, is *that Faith* to which all Things are poſſible, to which all Nature, though as high as Mountains, and as ſtiff as Oaks, muſt yield and obey. It heals all Diſeaſes, breaks the Bands of Death, and calls the Dead out of their Graves. Look at the ſmall *Seeds* of Plants, ſhut up in their own dead Huſks, and cover'd with thick Earth, and ſee how they grow. What do they do? They hunger, and thirſt after the Light, and Air of this World. Their Hunger eats that, which they hunger after, and this is their Vegetation. If the Plant ceaſes to hunger, it withers and dies, tho' ſurrounded with the Air and Light of this World.

This is the true Nature of the ſpiritual Life, it is as truly a *Vegetation*, as that of Plants, and nothing but its *own Hunger* can help it to the true Food of its Life. If this Hunger of the Soul ceaſeth, it withers and dies, tho' in the midſt of divine Plenty. Our Lord to ſhew us, that the new Birth is really a State of ſpiritual Vegetation, compares it to a ſmall Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, from whence a great Plant ariſes. Now every Seed has a Life in it ſelf, or elſe it could not grow. What is this Life? It is nothing elſe but a

Hunger

Hunger in the Seed after the Air and Light of this World, which Hunger being met and fed by the Light and Air of Nature, changes the Seed into a living Plant. Thus it is with the *Seed* of Heaven in the Soul, it has a Life in itſelf, or elſe no Life could ariſe from it. What is this Life? It is nothing elſe but a *Hunger* after God, and Heaven, which no ſooner ſtirs, or is ſuffer'd to ſtir, but it is met, embrac'd, and quicken'd by the Light, and Spirit of God, and Heaven, and ſo a new Man in Chriſt, is form'd from the Seed of Heaven, as a new Plant from a Seed in the Earth. Let us ſuppoſe now, that the *Seed* of a Plant, had *Senſe* and *Reaſon*, and that inſtead of continually hungring after, and drawing in, the Virtue of the Light, and Air of our outward Nature, it ſhould amuſe and content its Hunger with *reaſoning* about the Nature of Hunger, and the different Powers and Virtues of Light and Air, muſt not ſuch a Seed of all Neceſſity wither away, without ever becoming a living Plant? Now this is no falſe Similitude of the *Seed* of Life in Man; Man has a Power of drawing all the Virtue of Heaven into himſelf, becauſe the Seed of Heaven is the *Gift* of God in his Soul, which wants the Light and Spirit of God to bring it to the Birth, juſt as the Seed of the Plant

wants the Light and Air of this World; it cannot poſſibly grow up in God, but by taking in Light, Life and Spirit from Heaven, as the Creatures of Time take in the Light, and Life, and Spirit of this World. If therefore the Soul inſtead of hungring after Heaven, inſtead of eating the Fleſh and Blood of the Chriſt of God, contents, and amuſes this Seed of Life with Ideas, and Notions, and Sounds, muſt not ſuch a Soul of neceſſity wither and die, without ever becoming a living Creature of Heaven? Wonder, not therefore, *Academicus*, that *all the Work* of our Salvation, and Regeneration, is by the Scripture *wholly* confin'd to the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God *living*, and *working* in us. It is for the ſame Reaſon, and on the ſame Neceſſity, that the Life and Growth of the Creatures of this World, muſt be *wholly* aſcrib'd to the Powers of this World living, and working in them. Nor does all this in the leaſt Degree, make a Man a *Machine*, or without any Power with regard to his Salvation. He muſt grow in God, as the Plants grow in this World, from a Power that is not his own, as they grow from the Powers of outward Nature. But he differs entirely from the Plants in this, that an uncontroulable Will, which is his own, muſt be the

Leader

Leader and Beginner of his Growth either in God, or Nature. It is ſtrictly true, that all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himſelf, and it is as ſtrictly true, that *all the Work* of his Salvation is *ſolely* the Work of God in his Soul. All his Salvation dependeth upon himſelf, becauſe his *Will-ſpirit*, has its Power of Motion in itſelf. As a Will, it can only receive that which it willeth, every Thing elſe is abſolutely ſhut out of it. For it is the unalterable Nature of the Will, that it cannot poſſibly receive any Thing into it, but that which it willeth, its willing, is its only Power of receiving, and therefore there can be no poſſible Entrance for God, or Heaven into the Soul, till the Will-ſpirit of the Soul deſireth it, and thus all Man's Salvation dependeth upon himſelf. On the other Hand, nothing can create, effect, or bring forth a Birth, or Growth of the divine Life in the Soul, but that Light and Spirit of God, which brings forth the divine Life in Heaven, and all heavenly Beings. And thus the *Work* of our Salvation is wholly and ſolely the Work of the Light, and Spirit of God, dwelling and operating in us. Thus, *Academicus*, you ſee that God is all; that nothing, but his Life and working Power in us, can be our Salvation, and yet that nothing but the *Spirit*

of Prayer, can make it *possible* for us to have it, or be capable of it. And therefore neither you, nor any other human Soul can be without the Operation of the Light and Spirit of God in it, but because its *Will-Spirit*, or its Spirit of *Prayer*, is turn'd towards something else, for we are always in Union with that, with which our Will is united. Again, look, *Academicus*, at the Light, and Air of this World, you see with what a Freedom of Communication they overflow, enrich, and enliven every Thing, they enter every where, if not hindered by something, that withstands their Entrance. This may represent to you, the ever overflowing free Communication of the Light, and Spirit of God to every human Soul. They are every where, we are encompass'd with them, our Souls are as near to them, as our Bodies are to the Light and Air of this World, nothing shuts them out of us, but the Will and Desire of our Souls, turn'd from them, and praying for something else. I say *praying* for something else, for you are to notice this, as a certain Truth, that every Man's Life is a *continual State* of Prayer, he is no Moment free from it, nor can possibly be so. For all our natural Tempers, be they what they will, Ambition, Covetousness, Selfishness, World-

ly-mindedneſs, Pride, Envy, Hatred, Malice, or any other Luſt whatever, are all of them in reality only ſo many different *Kinds*, and *Forms* of a *Spirit of Prayer*, which is as inſeparable from the Heart, as Weight is from the Body. For every natural Temper is nothing elſe, but a Manifeſtation of the Deſire, and Prayer of the Heart, and ſhews us how it *Works*, and Wills. And as the Heart worketh and willeth, *ſuch* and no other is its Prayer. All elſe is only Form, and Fiction, and empty beating of the Air. If therefore the working Deſire of the Heart is not habitually turn'd towards God, if this is not our Spirit of Prayer, we are neceſſarily in a State of Prayer towards ſomething elſe, that carries us from God, and brings all Kind of Evil into us. For this is the Neceſſity of our Nature, pray we muſt, as ſure as our Heart is alive, and therefore when the State of our Heart is not a Spirit of Prayer to God, we pray *without ceaſing* to ſome or other Part of the Creation. The Man whoſe Heart habitually tends towards the Riches, Honours, Powers, or Pleaſures of this Life, is in a *continual* State of Prayer towards all theſe Things. His Spirit ſtands always *bent* towards them, they have his Hope, his Love, his Faith, and are the many Gods that he worſhips, and tho'

when he is upon his Knees, and uſes Forms of Prayer, he directs them to the God of Heaven, yet theſe are in Reality the God of his Heart, and in a ſad Senſe of the Words, he really worſhips them in Spirit, and in Truth. Hence you may ſee, *Academicus*, how it comes to paſs, that there is ſo much Praying, and yet ſo little of true Piety amongſt us. The *Bells* are daily calling us to Church, our *Cloſets* abound with *Manuals* of Devotion, yet how little Fruit! It is all for this Reaſon, becauſe our Prayers are not *our own*, they are not the Abundance of *our own* Heart, are not *found* and *felt* within us, as we feel our own Hunger and Thirſt, but are only ſo many borrow'd Forms of Speech, which we uſe at certain Times and Occaſions. And therefore it is no wonder that little Good comes of it. What Benefit could it have been to the *Phariſee*, if with a Heart inwardly full of its own Pride, and Self-exaltation, he had outwardly hung down his Head, ſmote upon his Breaſt, and borrow'd the *Publican*'s Words, *God be merciful* to me a Sinner? What greater Good can be expected from our Praying in the Words of *David*, or Singing his Pſalms ſeven Times a Day, if our Heart hath no more of the Spirit of *David* in it, than the Heart of the *Phariſee* had of the Spirit of the humble *Publican*?

Acad.

Acad. Oh *Theophilus*, Truth and Reaſon forces me to conſent to what you ſay, and yet I am afraid of following you. For you here ſeem to condemn Forms of Prayer in publick, and *Manuals* of Devotion in private. What will become of Religion, if theſe are ſet aſide, or diſregarded?

Theoph. Dear *Academius*, abate your Fright. Can you think, that I am againſt your praying in the Words of *David*, or breathing his Spirit in your Prayers, or that I would cenſure your ſinging his Pſalms ſeven Times a Day? Remember how very lately I put into your Hands, the *Book* call'd, *A Serious Call to a devout Life*, &c. and then think how unlikely it is, that I ſhould be againſt Times, and Methods of Devotion. At three ſeveral Times, we are told, our Lord pray'd, repeating the *ſame Form of Words*, and therefore a ſet Form of Words are not only conſiſtent with, but may be highly ſuitable to the moſt divine Spirit of Prayer. If your own Heart for Days, and Weeks, was unable to alter, or break off from inwardly thinking, and ſaying, *Hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come, thy Will be done.* If at other times for Weeks and Months, it ſtood always inwardly in another Form of Prayer, unable to vary, or depart from ſaying, *Come Lord Jeſus*,

ſus, come quickly, with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers into my Soul, that I may be born again of thee, a new Creature, I ſhould be ſo far from cenſuring ſuch a *Formality* of Prayer, that I ſhould ſay, bleſſed and happy are they, whoſe Hearts are ty'd to ſuch a Form of Words. It is not therefore, Sir, a ſet Form of Words, that is ſpoken againſt, but a *heartleſs* Form, a Form that has no Relation to, or Correſpondence with the State of the Heart that uſes it. All that I have ſaid, is only to teach you the true Nature of Prayer, that it is only the Work of the Heart, and that the Heart only prays in Reality (whatever its Words are) for that, which it habitually wills, likes, loves, and longs to have. It is not therefore the uſing the Words of *David*, or any other Saint in your Prayers, that is cenſur'd, but the uſing them without that State of Heart, which firſt ſpake them forth; and the truſting to them, becauſe they are a good Form, tho' in our Hearts we have nothing that is like them. It would be good to ſay inceſſantly with holy *David*, *My Heart is athirſt for God.*——*As the Hart deſireth the Water-brooks, ſo longeth my Soul after thee, O God.* But there is no Goodneſs in ſaying daily theſe Words, if no ſuch Thirſt is felt, or deſir'd in the Heart. And my Friend,

Friend, you may eaſily know, that dead Forms of Religion, and Numbers of repeated Prayers keep Men content with their State of Devotion, becauſe they make uſe of ſuch holy Prayers, tho' their Hearts, from Morning to Night, are in a State quite contrary to them, and join no farther in them, than in liking to uſe them at certain Times.

Acad. I acquieſce, *Theophilus*, in the Truth of what you have ſaid, and plainly ſee the Neceſſity of condemning what you have condemn'd, which is not the Form, but the *heartleſs* Form. But ſtill I have a Scruple upon me, I ſhall be almoſt afraid of going to Church, where there are ſo many good Prayers offer'd up to God, as ſuſpecting they may not be the Prayers or Language of my own Heart, and ſo become only a *Lip-labour*, or what is worſe, an *Hypocriſy* before God.

Theoph. I don't, *Academicus*, diſlike your Scruple at all, for you do well to be afraid of ſaying any Thing of yourſelf, or to God, in your Prayers, which your Heart does not truly ſay. It is alſo good for you to think that many of the Prayers of the Church may go faſter, and higher, than your Heart can in Truth go along with them. For this will put you upon a right Care over yourſelf, and ſo to live, that as a true Son of your Mother

the

the Church, your Heart may be able to ſpeak her Language, conform to her Service, and find the Delight of your Soul in the Spirit of her Prayers. But this will only then come to paſs, when the Spirit of Prayer is the Spirit of your Heart; then every good Word, whether in a *Form*, or out of a Form, whether heard, or read, or thought, will be as ſuitable to your Heart, as gratifying to it, as Food is to the hungry, and Drink to the thirſty Soul. But till the Spirit of the Heart is thus renew'd, till it is *empty'd* of all earthly Deſires, and ſtands in an *habitual* Hunger and Thirſt after God, (which is the true Spirit of Prayer,) till then, all our Forms of Prayer will be more or leſs, but too much like *Leſſons* that are given to *Scholars*, and we ſhall moſtly ſay them, only becauſe we dare not neglect them. But be not diſcourag'd, *Academicus*, take the following Advice, and then you may go to Church, without any Danger of a mere Lip-labour, or Hypocriſy, altho' there ſhould be a *Hymn*, or a *Pſalm*, or a *Prayer*, whoſe Language is higher, than that of your own Heart. Do this. Go to the Church, as the *Publican* went into the Temple; ſtand *inwardly* in the Spirit of your Mind, in that *Form*, which he outwardly expreſs'd, when he caſt down his Eyes, ſmote

upon

upon his Breaſt, and could only ſay, God be merciful to me a Sinner! Stand unchangeably (at leaſt in your Deſire) in *this Form* and State of Heart; it will ſanctify every Petition that comes out of your Mouth; and when any Thing is read, or ſung, or pray'd, that is more exalted, and fervent than your Heart is, if you make this an Occaſion of a farther *ſinking down* in the Spirit of the Publican, you will then be helped, and highly bleſſed by thoſe Prayers and Praiſes, which ſeem only to fit and belong to a better Heart, than yours.

This, my Friend, is a Secret of Secrets, it will help you to reap, where you have not ſown, and be a continual Source of Grace in your Soul. This will not only help you to receive Good from thoſe Prayers, which ſeem too good for the State of your Heart, but will help you to find Good from every Thing elſe. For every Thing that inwardly ſtirs in you, or outwardly happens to you, becomes a real Good to you, if it either finds, or excites in you this humble Form of Mind. For nothing is in vain, or without Profit to the humble Soul, like the Bee it takes its Honey even from bitter Herbs, it ſtands always in a State of divine Growth, and every Thing that falls upon it, is like a Dew of Heaven to it. Shut

up yourſelf therefore in this *Form* of Humility, all Good is inclos'd in it, it is a Water of Heaven, that turns the Fire of the fallen Soul into the Meekneſs of the divine Life, and creates that Oil, out of which the Love to God, and Man, gets its Flame. Be inclos'd therefore always in it, let it be as a Garment wherewith you are always cover'd, and the Girdle with which you are girt; breath Nothing but in and from its Spirit, ſee Nothing but with its Eyes, hear Nothing but with its Ears, and then, whether you are in the Church, or out of the Church, hearing the Praiſes of God, or receiving Wrongs from Men, and the World, all will be Edification, and every Thing will help forward your Growth in the Life of God.

Acad. Indeed *Theophilus*, this Anſwer to my Scruple is quite good, I not only like, but I love it much; it gives as well an Unction to my Heart, as a Light to my Mind. All my Deſire now is, to live no longer to the World, to myſelf, my own natural Tempers, and Paſſions, but wholly to the Will of the bleſſed and adorable God, mov'd and guided by his holy Spirit.

Theoph. This Reſolution, *Academicus*, only ſhews that you are juſt come to your ſelf, for every Thing ſhort of this earneſt Deſire to

live

live wholly unto God, may be call'd a moſt dreadful Infatuation, or Madneſs, an Inſenſibility that cannot be deſcrib'd. For what elſe is our Life, but a Trial for the greateſt Evil or Good, that an Eternity can give us? What can be ſo dreadful, as to die poſſeſs'd of a wicked immoral Nature, or to go out of this World with Tempers that muſt keep us for ever burning in our own Fire and Brimſtone? What has God not done to prevent this? His redeeming Love began with our Fall, and kindles itſelf as a Spark of Heaven in every fallen Soul. It calls every Man to Salvation, and every Man is forc'd to hear, tho' he will not obey its Voice. God has ſo loved the World, that his only Son hung and expir'd bleeding on the Croſs, not to atone his own Wrath againſt us, but to extinguiſh our own Hell within us, to pour his heavenly Love into us, to ſhew us, that Meekneſs, ſuffering, and dying to our own fallen Nature, is the *one*, *only*, *poſſible* Way for fallen Man to be alive again in God. Are we yet Sons of Pride, and led away with Vanity? Do the Powers of Darkneſs rule over us, do impure evil Spirits poſſeſs and drive on our Lives? Has Sin loſt all its Power of frighting us, is Remorſe of Conſcience no longer felt? Are Falſhood, Guile, Debauchery, Profaneneſs, Perjury,

jury, Bribery, Corruption, and Adultery, no longer ſeeking to hide themſelves in Corners, but openly entring all our high Places, giving Battle to every Virtue, and laying Claim to the Government of the World? Are we thus near being ſwallow'd up by a Deluge of Vice and Impiety, all this is not come upon us, becauſe God has left us too much without help from Heaven, or too much expos'd us to the Powers of Hell, but it is becauſe we have rejected and deſpis'd the *whole Myſtery* of our Salvation, and trampl'd under Foot the precious Blood of Chriſt, which alone has that Omnipotence, that can either bring Heaven into us, or drive Hell out of us. Oh *Britain*, *Britain*, think that the Son of God ſaith unto thee, as he ſaid, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gather'd thy Children as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not! Behold your Houſe is left unto you deſolate.* And now let me ſay, what aileth thee, O *Britiſh* Earth, that thou *quakeſt*, and the Foundations of thy Churches that they *totter?* Juſt *that ſame* aileth thee, as ailed *Judah*'s Earth, when the divine Saviour of the World dying on the Croſs, was *revil'd*, *ſcorn'd*, and *mock'd*, by the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, then the *Earth quak'd*, *the Rocks rent*, and the Sun refus'd

to

to give its Light. Nature again declares for God, the Earth, and the Elements can no longer bear our Sins, *Jeruſalem*'s Doom for *Jeruſalem*'s Sin, may well be fear'd by us. Oh ye miſerable *Pens* dipt in Satan's Ink, that dare to publiſh the Folly of believing in Jeſus Chriſt, where will you hide your guilty Heads, when Nature diſſolv'd ſhall ſhew you the Rain-bow, on which the crucify'd Saviour ſhall ſit in Judgment, and every Work receive its Reward? O tremble! ye *apoſtate* Sons, that come out of the Schools of Chriſt, to fight Lucifer's Battles, and do that for him, which neither he, nor his Legions can do for themſelves. Their inward Pride, Spite, Wrath, Malice and Rage againſt God, and Chriſt, and human Nature, have no *Pens* but yours, no *Apoſtles* but you. They muſt be forc'd to work in the Dark, to ſteal privately into impure Hearts, could they not beguile you into a fond *Belief*, that you are *Lovers* of Truth, *Friends* of Reaſon, *Detectors* of Fraud, great *Genius's*, and *moral Philoſophers*, merely and ſolely becauſe ye blaſpheme Chriſt, and the Goſpel of God. Poor deluded Souls, reſcu'd from Hell, by the Blood of Chriſt, call'd by God to poſſeſs the Thrones of fallen Angels, permitted to live only by the Mercy of God, that ye may be born again from above, my

Heart bleeds for you, think, I beſeech you, in Time what Mercies ye are trampling under your Feet. Say not that *Reaſon* and your intellectual Faculties ſtand in your Way, that theſe are the *beſt Gifts*, that God has given you, and that theſe ſuffer you not to come to Chriſt. For all this is as vain a Pretence, and as groſs a Miſtake, as if ye were to ſay, that you had nothing but your *Feet* to carry you to Heaven. For your *Heart* is the beſt and greateſt *Gift* of God to you, it is the higheſt, greateſt, ſtrongeſt, and nobleſt *Power* of your Nature, it forms your whole Life, be it what it will; all Evil and all Good comes from it, your Heart alone has the Key of Life, and Death, it does all that it will; Reaſon is but its *Play-thing*, and whether in Time or Eternity, can only be a *mere Beholder* of the *Wonders* of Happineſs, or *Forms* of Miſery, which the right, or wrong *working* of the Heart is enter'd into.

I will here give you an infallible *Touch-ſtone*, that will try all to the Truth. It is this. Retire from the World, and all Converſation only for *one Month*, neither write, nor read, nor debate any Thing in private with yourſelf, ſtop all the former Workings of your Heart and Mind, and with all the Strength of your Heart, ſtand all this Month

as continually as you can, in this following Form of Prayer to God. Offer it frequently on your Knees, but whether ſitting, ſtanding or walking, be always inwardly longing, and earneſtly praying this *one Prayer* to God, " That of his great Goodneſs, he would make " known to you, and take from your Heart, " every *Kind* and *Form*, and *Degree* of Pride, " whether it be from evil Spirits, or your " own corrupt Nature, and that he would " awaken in you the deepeſt *Depth* and *Truth* " of all that Humility, which can make you " capable of his Light and holy Spirit." Reject every Thought, but that of wiſhing and praying in this Manner from the bottom of your Heart, with ſuch Truth and Earneſtneſs, as People in Torment wiſh and pray to be deliver'd from it. Now if ye dare not, if your Hearts will not, cannot give themſelves up in this Manner to the Spirit of Prayer, then the *Touch-ſtone* has done its Work, and ye may be as fully aſſur'd, both what your Infidelity is, and from what it proceeds, as ye can be of the plaineſt Truth in Nature. This will ſhew you, how vainly you appeal to your *Reaſon*, and *Speculation*, as the Cauſe of your Infidelity, that it is full as falſe, and abſurd, as if *Thieves*, and *Adulterers* ſhould ſay, that their Theft and Adultery was entire-

ly owing to their bodily *Eyes*, which ſhewed them external Objects, and not to any Thing that was *wrong* or *bad* in their Hearts. On the other Hand, if ye can and will give yourſelves up in *Truth* and *Sincerity* to this Spirit of Prayer, I will venture to affirm, that if ye had twice as many evil Spirits in you, as *Mary Magdalene* had, they will all be caſt out of you, and ye will be forc'd with her, to weep with Tears of Love, at the Feet of the holy Jeſus.

But here, my Friends, I ſtop, that we may return to the Matter we had in hand.

Ruſt. You have made no Digreſſion, *Theophilus*, from our main Point, which was to recommend Chriſtianity to poor *Humanus*. He muſt, I am ſure, have felt the Deaths-blows that you have here given to the Infidel Scheme. Their *Idol* of Reaſon, which is the vain God, that they worſhip in vain, is here like *Dagon* fallen to the Ground, never to riſe up again. *Humanus* is caught by your *Bait* of Love, and I dare ſay he wants only to have this Converſation ended, that he may try himſelf to the Truth, by this divine *Touch-ſtone*, which you have put into his Hands.

Acad. Give me leave, Gentlemen, to add one Word to this Matter. *Theophilus* has here fairly pull'd Reaſon out of its uſurp'd Throne,

Throne, and ſhewn it to be a powerleſs, idle *Toy*, when compar'd to the royal Strength of the Heart, which is the kingly Power that has all the Government of Life in its Hands. But if *Humanus*, or any one elſe would ſee *Reaſon* fully maintain'd in all its *juſt Rights*, and yet entirely diſarm'd of all its Pretences to a Religion of its own, and the Truth of the Goſpel fully prov'd to every Man, learned, or unlearned, from the known State of his own Heart; if he would ſee all this ſet forth in the ſtrongeſt, cleareſt, Light, he need only read about an hundred Pages of a *Book* * publiſh'd about twelve Years ago, to which no Anſwer has, nor it may be, ever will be given by any Patron of Reaſon, and Infidelity. And if Part of that Book (as I have often wiſh'd) beginning at Page 161, to 275, was printed by itſelf, and known and read in every Part of the Kingdom, all Chriſtians, tho' no Scholars, would have Learning enough both to ſee the *deep*, *true*, and *comfortable* Foundation of their Goſpel Faith, and the miſerable Folly, and Ignorance of thoſe, who would ſet up a Religion of human Reaſon inſtead of it. But now, *Theo-*

* A Demonſtration of the Groſs and Fundamental Errors of a late Book call'd, *A Plain Account of the Nature*, &c. *of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.*

philus, I beg we may return to that very Point concerning Prayer, where we left off. I think my Heart is entirely devoted to God, and that I desire nothing but to live in such a State of Prayer as may best keep me under the Guidance and Direction of the holy Spirit. Assist me therefore, my dear Friend, in this important Matter, give me the fullest Directions, that you can, and if you have any *Manual* of Devotion, that you prefer, or any Method that you would put me in, pray let me know it.

Rust. I beg leave to speak a Word to *Academicus*. I am glad, Sir, to see this Fire of Heaven thus far kindled in your Soul, but wonder that you should want to know how you are to keep up its Flame, which is like wanting to know, how you are to love, and desire that, which you love and desire. Does a blind, or sick, or lame Man, want to know, how he shall wish and desire Sight, Health, and Limbs, or would he be at a Loss, till some Form of Words taught him how to long for them? Now you can have no Desire, or Prayer for any *Grace*, or Help from God, till you in some Degree as surely feel the *Want* of them, and desire the *Good* of them, as the sick Man feels the Want, and desires the Good of Health. But when this is your Case, you want

want no more to be told how to pray, than the thirſty Man wants to be told, what he ſhall aſk for. Have you not fully conſented to this Truth, that the Heart only can pray, and that it prays for nothing but *that*, which it *loves*, *wills* and *wiſhes* to have. But can *Love*, or *Deſire* want *Art*, or *Method* to teach it to be that which it is? If from the Bottom of your Heart you have a ſincere, warm Love for your moſt valuable Friend, would you want to buy a Book to tell you what Sentiments you feel in your Heart towards this Friend, what Comfort, what Joy, what Gratitude, what Truſt, what Honour, what Confidence, what Faith, are all alive and ſtirring in your Heart towards him? Aſk not therefore, *Academicus*, for a Book of Prayers, but aſk your Heart what is within it, what it feels, how it ſtirs, what it wants, what it would have alter'd, what it deſires, and then, inſtead of calling upon *Theophilus* for Aſſiſtance, ſtand in the ſame Form of Petition to God.

For this turning to God according to the inward *Feeling*, *Want*, and *Motion* of your own Heart, in Love, in Truſt, in Faith of having from him, all that you want and wiſh to have, this turning thus unto God, whether it be with, or without Words, is the

beſt Form of Prayer in the World.——Now no Man can be ignorant of the State of his own Heart, or a Stranger to thoſe Tempers that are alive and ſtirring in him, and therefore no Man can want a Form of Prayer; for what ſhould be the Form of his Prayer, but that which the Condition and State of his Heart demands? If you know of no Trouble, feel no Burden, want nothing to be alter'd, or remov'd, nothing to be increas'd or ſtrengthn'd in you, how can you pray for any Thing of this Kind? But if your Heart knows its own Plague, feels its inward Evil, knows what it wants to have remov'd, will you not let your Diſtreſs form the Manner of your Prayer? Or will you pray in a Form of Words, that have no more Agreement with your State, than if a Man walking above Ground, ſhould beg every Man he met, to pull him out of a deep Pit. For Prayers not form'd according to the real State of your Heart, are but like a Prayer to be pull'd out of a deep Well, when you are not in it. Hence you may ſee, how unreaſonable it is, to make a Myſtery of Prayer, or an Art, that needs ſo much Inſtruction, ſince every Man is, and only can be directed by his *own inward* State, and Condition, when, and how, and what he is to pray for, as every Man's outward State ſhews him

what he outwardly wants. And yet it ſhould ſeem, as if a Prayer Book was highly neceſſary, and ought to be the Performance of great Learning, and Abilities, ſince only our learned Men, and Scholars make our Prayer Books.

Acad. I did not imagine, *Ruſticus*, that you would have ſo openly declar'd againſt *Manuals* of Devotion, ſince you can't but know, that not only the moſt learned, but the moſt pious Doctors of the Church, conſider them as neceſſary Helps to Devotion.

Ruſt. If you, *Academicus*, was oblig'd to go a long Journey on *Foot*, and yet thro' a Weakneſs in your Legs could not ſet one Foot before another, you would do well to get the beſt travelling *Crutches* that you could.

But if with ſound and good Legs, you would not ſtir one Step, till you had got *Crutches* to hop with; ſurely a Man might ſhew you the Folly of not walking with your own Legs, without being thought a declar'd Enemy to Crutches, or the Makers of them. Now a *Manual* is not ſo good a Help, as *Crutches*, and yet you ſee Crutches are only proper, when our Legs cannot do their Office. It is, I ſay, not ſo good a help as Crutches, becauſe that which you do with the Crutches, is that *very ſame* Thing, that you

ſhould

ſhould have done with your Legs, you *really* travel; but when the Heart cannot take one Step in Prayer, and you therefore read your Manual, you don't do that *very ſame* Thing, which your Heart ſhould have done, that is, *really* pray. A fine Manual therefore is not to be conſider'd as a means of Praying, or as ſomething that puts you in a State of Prayer, as Crutches help you to travel, but its chief uſe as a Book of Prayers to a dead, and hardned Heart, that has no Prayer of its own, is to ſhew it, what a *State* and *Spirit* of Prayer it *wants*, and at what a ſad Diſtance it is from feeling all that Variety of humble, penitent, grateful, fervent, reſign'd, loving Sentiments, which are deſcrib'd in the Manual, that ſo being touch'd with a View of its own miſerable State, it may begin its own Prayer to God for Help. But I have done. *Theophilus* may now anſwer your earneſt Requeſt.

Theoph. Your earneſt Deſire, *Academicus*, to live in the Spirit of Prayer, and be truly govern'd by it, is a moſt excellent Deſire; for to be a Man of Prayer is that which the Apoſtle means by *living in the Spirit, and having our Converſation in Heaven.* It is to have done, not only with the confeſs'd Vices, but with the allow'd Follies, and Vanities of this

this World. To tell such a Soul of the *Innocency* of Levity, that it need not run away from idle Discourse, vain Gaiety, and trifling Mirth, as being the harmless Relief of our heavy Natures, is like telling the *Flame* that it need not always be ascending upwards. But here you are to observe, that this Spirit of Prayer is not to be taught you by a Book, or brought into you by any *Art* from without, but must be an inward Birth, that must arise from your own *Fire* and *Light* within you, as the Air arises from the Fire and Light of this World. For the Spirit of every Being, be it what, or where it will, or be it's Spirit of what Kind it will, is only the Breath or Spirit that proceeds from its own Fire and Light. In vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual Creatures, it is all in the same Manner, Spirit is the *third Form* of its Life, and is the Birth that proceeds from the other *two*, and is the Manifestation of their Nature and Qualities. For such as the Fire and Light are, such and no other, neither higher nor lower, neither better nor worse is the *Spirit* that proceeds from them. Now the Reason why all, and every Life does, and must stand in this Form, is wholly and solely from hence, because the Deity, the one Source and Fountain of all Life, is a *triune* God, whose *third Form* is, and

and is call'd the Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

The *painful* Senſe and Feeling of what you are, kindled into a working State of Senſibility by the Light of God within you, is the *Fire* and *Light* from whence your Spirit of Prayer proceeds. In its firſt kindling nothing is found, or felt but Pain, Wrath and Darkneſs, as is to be ſeen in the firſt kindling of every Heat, or Fire. And therefore its firſt Prayer is nothing elſe but a Senſe of Penitence, Self-condemnation, Confeſſion, and Humility. It feels nothing but its own Miſery, and ſo is all Humility. This Prayer of Humility is met by the divine Love, the Mercifulneſs of God embraces it, and then its Prayer is chang'd into Hymns, and Songs, and Thankſgivings. When this State of Fervour has done its Work, has melted away all earthly Paſſions and Affections, and left no Inclination in the Soul, but to delight in God alone, then its Prayer changes again. It is now come ſo near to God, has found ſuch Union with him, that it does not ſo much pray as live in God. Its Prayer is not any particular Action, is not the Work of any particular Faculty, not confin'd to Times, or Words, or Place, but is the Work of his whole Being, which continually ſtands in Fulneſs of Faith, in Purity of Love,

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in abſolute Reſignation, to do, and be, what, and how his Beloved pleaſeth. This is the laſt State of the Spirit of Prayer, and is its higheſt Union with God in this Life. Each of theſe foregoing States has its Time, its Variety of Workings, its Trials, Temptations, and Purifications, which can only be known by Experience in the Paſſage through them. The *one* only and *infallible* Way to go ſafely through all the Difficulties, Trials, Temptations, Dryneſs, or Oppoſition of our own evil Tempers, is this. 'Tis to expect nothing from ourſelves, to truſt to nothing in ourſelves, but in every Thing expect, and depend upon God for Relief. Keep faſt hold of this *Thread*, and then let your Way be what it will, Darkneſs, Temptation, or the Rebellion of Nature, you will be led through all, to an Union with God. For nothing hurts us in any State, but an Expectation of ſomething in it, and from it, which we ſhould only expect from God. We are looking for our *own* Virtue, our *own* Piety, our own Goodneſs, and ſo live on, and on in our *own* Poverty and Weakneſs; to Day pleas'd and comforted with the ſeeming Strength and Firmneſs of our own pious Tempers, and fancying ourſelves to be *ſomewhat*, to Morrow fallen into our own *Mire*, we are dejected,

dejected, but not humbl'd, we grieve, but it is only the Grief of Pride, at the seeing our Perfection not to be such as we vainly imagin'd. And thus it will be, till the *whole Turn* of our Minds is so chang'd, that we as fully see, and know our *Inability* to have any Goodness of *our own*, as to have a Life of our own.

For since nothing is or can be good in us, but the Life of God manifested in us, how can this be had but from God alone? When we are happily brought to this Conviction, then we have done with all Thought of being our own Builders, the whole Spirit of our Mind is become a mere *Faith*, and *Hope*, and *Trust* in the sole Operation of God's Spirit, looking no more to any other Power, to be form'd in Christ new Creatures, then we look to any other Power for the Resurrection of our Bodies at the last Day. Hence may be seen that the Trials of every State are its greatest Blessings, they do that for us, which we most of all want to have done, they force us to know our own *Nothingness* and the *All* of God.

People who have long dwelt in the Fervours of Devotion in a high Sensibility of divine Affections, practising every Virtue with a kind of Greediness, are frighted, when *Coldness* seizes upon them, when their Hymns give no Transport, and their Hearts instead

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of Flaming with the Love of every Virtue, ſeem ready to be overcome by every Vice. But here, keep *faſt hold* of the Thread I mention'd before, and all is well. For this *Coldneſs* is the divine *Offspring*, or genuine Birth of the former Fervour, it comes from it as a good Fruit, and brings the Soul nearer to God, than the Fervour did. The Fervour was good, and did a good Work in the Soul, it overcame the earthly Nature, and made the Soul delight in God and ſpiritual Things; but its Delight was too much an *own Delight*, a fancy'd Self-holineſs, and occaſion'd Reſt and Satisfaction in ſelf, which if it had continued uninterrupted, undiſcover'd, an earthly Self had only been chang'd into a ſpiritual Self. Therefore I call'd this Coldneſs, or loſs of Fervour, its divine *Offspring*, becauſe it brings a divine Effect, or more fruitful Progreſs in the divine Life. For this Coldneſs overcomes, and delivers us from ſpiritual Self, as Fervour overcame the earthly Nature. It does the Work that Fervour did, but in a higher Degree, becauſe it gives up more, ſacrifices more, and brings forth more Reſignation to God, than Fervour did, and therefore it is more in God, and receives more from him. The devout Soul therefore is always Safe in every State, if it makes every Thing

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an Occaſion either of riſing up, or falling down into the Hands of God, and exerciſing Faith and Truſt, and Reſignation to him. Fervour is good, and ought to be lov'd, but Tribulation, Diſtreſs, and Coldneſs, are better, becauſe they give Means and Power of exerciſing a *higher* Faith, a *purer* Love, and *more perfect* Reſignation to God, which are the beſt State of the Soul. And therefore the pious Soul that eyes only God, that means nothing but being his alone, can have no Stop put to its Progreſs; Light and Darkneſs equally aſſiſt him, in the Light he looks up to God, in the Darkneſs he lays hold on God, and ſo they both do him the ſame Good.

This little Scetch, *Academicus*, of the Nature, and Progreſs of the Spirit of Prayer, may ſhew you, that a *Manual* is not ſo great a Matter, as you imagin'd.

The beſt Inſtruction, that I can give you, as helpful, or preparatory to the Spirit of Prayer, is already fully given, where we have ſet forth the original Perfection, the miſerable Fall, and the glorious Redemption of Man. It is the true Knowledge of theſe great Things that can do all for you, which human Inſtruction can do. Theſe Things muſt fill you with a Diſlike of your preſent State, drive all earthly Deſires out of your Soul, and create

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an earneſt longing after your firſt Perfection. For Prayer cannot be taught you by giving you a Book of Prayers, but by awakening in you a true Senſe and Knowledge of what you are, and what you ſhould be, that ſo you may ſee, and know, and feel what Things you want, and are to pray for. For a Man does not, cannot pray for any Thing, becauſe a fine Petition for it is put into his Hands, but becauſe his *own* Condition is a *Reaſon* and *Motive* for his aſking for it. And therefore it is, that the *Spirit of Prayer* in the firſt Part, began with a full Diſcovery, and Proof of theſe high and important Matters, at the Sight of which, the World, and all that is in it, ſhrinks into nothing, and every Thing paſt, preſent, and to come awakens in our Hearts a continual Prayer, and longing Deſire after God, Chriſt, and Eternity.

Acad. I perceive then, *Theophilus*, that you direct me entirely to my *own* Prayer in my private Devotions, and not to the Uſe of any Book. But ſurely you don't take this to be right in general, that the common People who are unlearned, and moſtly of low Underſtandings, ſhould kneel down in private without any borrowed Form of Prayer, ſaying only what comes then into their own Heads.

Theoph. It would be very wrong, *Academicus*, to condemn a Manual, as ſuch, or to tell any People learned, or unlearned, that they ought not to make any uſe of it. This would be quite raſh and ſilly. But it cannot be wrong, or hurtful to any Body, to ſhew, that Prayer is the natural Language of the Heart, and as ſuch, does not want any Form, or borrowed Words. Now all that has been ſaid of Manuals of Prayers, only amounts to thus much; that they are not neceſſary, nor the moſt natural, and excellent Way of praying. If they happen to be neceſſary to any Perſon, or to be his moſt excellent Way, it is becauſe the natural, real Prayer of his Heart is already engaged, loving, wiſhing, and longing after the Things of this Life, which makes him ſo inſenſible of his ſpiritual Wants, ſo blind and dead as to the Things of God, that he cannot pray for them, but ſo far as the Words of other People are put into his Mouth. If a Man is blind and knows it not, he may be told to pray for Sight; if he is ſick and knows nothing of it, he may be told to pray for Health; ſo if the Soul is in this State with Regard to its ſpiritual Wants, a Manual may be of good Uſe to it, not ſo much by helping it to pray, as by ſhewing it

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at what a miſerable Diſtance it is from thoſe Tempers, which belong to Prayer.

But when a Man has had ſo much Benefit from the Goſpel, as to know his own Miſery, his Want of a Redeemer, who he is, and how he is to be found, there every Thing ſeems to be done, both to awaken and direct his Prayer, and to make it a true praying in and by the Spirit. For when the Heart really pants, and longs after God, its Prayer is a praying, as moved, and animated by the Spirit of God, it is the Breath or Inſpiration of God ſtirring, moving, and opening itſelf in the Heart. For though the earthly Nature, our *old Man* can oblige, or accuſtom himſelf to take heavenly Words at certain Times into his Mouth; yet this is a certain Truth, that nothing ever did, or can have the leaſt *Deſire* or *Tendency* to aſcend to Heaven, but that which came down from Heaven, and therefore nothing in the Heart can pray, aſpire, and long after God, but the Spirit of God moving and ſtirring in it. Every Breath therefore of the true Spirit of Prayer, can be nothing elſe but the Breath of the Spirit of God, breathing, inſpiring, and moving the Heart in all its Variety of Motions and Affections towards God. And therefore every Time a good Deſire ſtirs in the Heart, a

good Prayer goes out of it, that reaches God, as being the Fruit and Work of his holy Spirit. When any Man feeling his Corruption, and the Power of Sin in his Soul, looks up to God with true Earneſtneſs of Faith and Deſire to be delivered from it, whether with Words, or without Words, how can he pray better? What need of any Change of Thoughts, or Words, or any Variety of Expreſſions, when the one Faith and Deſire of his Heart made known to God, and continued in, is not only all, but the moſt perfect Prayer he can make. Again, ſuppoſe the Soul in another State, feeling with Joy its offered Redeemer, and opening its Heart for the full Reception of him, if it ſtands in this State of Wiſhing and Longing for the Birth of Chriſt, how can its Prayer be in a higher Degree of Requeſt? or if it breaks out frequently in theſe Words, *come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly with all thy holy Nature, Spirit, and Tempers into my Soul,* is there any Occaſion to enlarge, or alter theſe Words into another Form of Expreſſion? Can he do better, or pray more, than by continually ſtanding from Time to Time in this State of wiſhing to have Chriſt formed in him. Nay is it not more likely, that his Heart ſhould be more divided and diſſipated by a numerous Change of

of Expreſſions, than by keeping united to one Expreſſion that ſets forth all that he wants? For it is the Reality, the Steadineſs, and Continuity of the Deſire, that is the Goodneſs of Prayer, and its Qualification to receive all that it wants. Our Lord ſaid to one that came to him, what wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? he anſwered, *Lord, that I may receive my Sight.* And he received it. Another ſaid, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou can'ſt make me clean*, and he was cleanſed. Tell me what Learning, or fine Parts are required to make ſuch Prayers as theſe, and yet what Wonders of Relief are recorded in Scripture, as given to ſuch ſhort Prayers as theſe? Or tell me, what Bleſſing of Prayer, or Faith, or Love, may not now be obtained in the ſame Way, and with as few Words, as then was done? Every Man therefore, that has any feeling of the Weight of his Sin, or any true Deſire to be delivered from it by Chriſt, has Learning and Capacity enough to make his own Prayer. For praying is not ſpeaking forth eloquently, but ſimply the true Deſire of the Heart, and the Heart ſimple and plain in good Deſires, is in the trueſt State of Preparation for all the Gifts and Graces of God. And this I muſt tell you, that the moſt ſimple Souls that have accuſtom-

ed themſelves to ſpeak their own Deſires and Wants to God, in ſuch ſhort, but true Breathings of their Hearts to him, will ſoon know more of Prayer, and the Myſteries thereof, than any Perſons who have only their Knowledge from Learning, and learned Books.

Acad. You ſeem to me, *Theophilus*, to have much Truth in what you ſay, and yet to be in a Way by yourſelf. I cannot take you to be with thoſe who place *all* in many and long Forms, and now I take you to be even more againſt thoſe, who make much Account of what they call a *gifted Man*, and make that to be the *true Gift* of Prayer when any one is able to pray *extempore*, or with his own Words for an Hour or two at a Time.

Theoph. I have ſhewn you, *Academicus*, that Prayer is purely the Deſire of the Heart, that it has not the Nature of praying, but ſo far as it is the true Language of the Heart. I have ſhewn you the great Benefit, that all People muſt receive from this true Prayer of the Heart. And to remove all Pretence of Want of Ability in the loweſt Sort of People, to pray from their own Hearts, I have ſhewn, that the moſt *ſimple ſhort* Petitions, when truly ſpoken by the Heart, have all the Perfection that Prayer can have.

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But mark, Sir, why, or when I aſcribe this Perfection to it. It is when the Heart ſtands continually in *this State* of wiſhing to have that, which is expreſſed in ſo few Words. It is then, that I ſaid, there was no Occaſion to *enlarge*, or *alter* the Words into another, or longer Form, becauſe the *Reality*, the *Steadineſs*, and the *Continuity* of the Deſire is the Goodneſs, and Perfection of the Prayer. Now, Sir, let us ſuppoſe two Men, the one is frequently an *Hour*, or two, or a whole Night on his Knees in ſilent Prayer, in high Acts of Love, and Faith and Reſignation to God, not outwardly ſpoken by his Mouth; the other is as long a Time pouring forth the Devotion of his Heart in a Variety of fervent Expreſſions. May not both theſe Men juſtly appeal to me, not only as not condemning, but as aſſerting the Goodneſs of their *Length* and Manner of Prayer, ſince I make a ſhort ſimple Petition to be only *then* a good Prayer, when it proceeds from a *ſteady*, *continued* Deſire of the Heart? It is not therefore *ſilence*, or a *ſimple* Petition, or a great *Variety* of outward Expreſſions, that *alters* the Nature of Prayer, or makes it to be *good* or *better*, but only and ſolely the *Reality*, *Steadineſs*, and *Continuity* of the Deſire, and therefore whether a Man offer this Deſire to

God in the ſilent Longing of the Heart, or in ſimple *ſhort* Petitions, or in a great *variety* of Words, is of no Conſequence, but all of them equally good, when the true and right State of the Heart is with them.

Thus you ſee, *Academicus*, that I am ſo far from being, as you ſaid in *a Way by myſelf*, that I am with every Man in *every Way*, whoſe Heart ſtands right towards God. But if you would know, what I would call a true, and great *Gift of Prayer*, and what I moſt of all wiſh for to my ſelf, it is a *good Heart that ſtands continually inclin'd towards God.*

Acad. I am not ſorry, *Theophilus*, that I have made ſo unreaſonable an Obſervation upon what you ſaid, ſince it has occaſion'd you to give ſo good, and juſt an Anſwer to it. But yet this *ſilent* Prayer you ſpeak of, is what I never read, nor heard any Thing of before, and it ſeems to me but like a *Ceaſing* to pray, and yet you ſeem to like it in its Turn, as well as any other Way of praying.

Theoph. All that I have ſaid of Prayer, *Academicus*, has been only to this End, to ſhew you its true and real Nature, whence it is to ariſe, where it is to be found, and how you are to begin, and become a true Proficient in it. If therefore, you was at preſent to look no farther, than how to put yourſelf in

a State of beginning to practiſe a Prayer proceeding from your own Heart, and continuing in it, leaving all that you are farther to know of Prayer, to be known in its own Time by Experience, which alone can open any true Knowledge in you; this would be much better for you, than to be aſking before Hand about ſuch Things, as are not your immediate Concern.

Begin to be a Man of Prayer, in this eaſy, ſimple and natural Manner, that has been ſet before you, and when you are faithful to this Method, you will then need no other Inſtructor in the Art of Prayer. Your own Heart thus turn'd to God, will want no one to tell it, when it ſhould be *ſimple* in its Petitions, or *various* in its Expreſſions, or proſtrate it ſelf in *Silence* before God. But this Haſtineſs of knowing Things, before they become our Concern, or belong to us, is very common. Thus a Man that has but juſt enter'd upon the Reformation of his Life, ſhall want to read, or hear a Diſcourſe upon *Perfection*, whether it be abſolutely attainable or not. And ſhall be more eager after what he can hear of this Matter, tho' at ſuch a Diſtance from himſelf, than of ſuch Things as concern the next Step that he is to take in his own proper State.

You,

You, my Friend, have already rightly taken the *first Step* in the ſpiritual Life, you have devoted your ſelf abſolutely to God, to live wholly to his Will, under the Light and Guidance of his holy Spirit, intending, ſeeking nothing in this World, but ſuch a Paſſage through it, as may tend to the Glory of God, and the Recovery of your own fallen Soul. Your *next Step* is this, 'tis a looking to the Continuance of this firſt Reſolution, and Donation of yourſelf to God, to ſee that it be kept alive, that every Thing you do, may be animated and directed by it, and all the Occurrences of every Day from Morning to Night be receiv'd by you, as becomes a Spirit that is devoted to God. Now this *ſecond Step* cannot be taken, but purely by Prayer, nothing elſe has the leaſt Power here but Prayer; I don't mean you muſt frequently read, or ſay a number of Prayers, (tho' this in its Turn may be good, and uſeful to you) but the Prayer I mean, and which you muſt practiſe, if you would take this *ſecond Step* in the ſpiritual Life, is *Prayer of the Heart*, or a Prayer of your own, proceeding from the State of your Heart, and its own Tendency to God. Of all Things therefore look to this Prayer of the Heart, conſider it as your infallible Guide to Heaven, turn from every

Thing

Thing that is an hinderance of it, that quenches, or abates its Fervour, love and like nothing but that which is suitable to it, and let every Day begin, go on, and end in the Spirit of it. Consider your self as always wrong, as having gone aside, and lost your right Path, when any *Delight*, *Desire*, or *Trouble* is suffer'd to live in you, that cannot be made a Part of this Prayer of the Heart to God. For nothing so infallibly shews us the true State of our Heart, as that which gives us either Delight or Trouble; for as our Delight and Trouble is, so is the State of our Heart; if therefore you are carry'd away with any Trouble, or Delight, that has not an immediate Relation to your Progress in the divine Life, you may be assur'd your Heart is not in its right State of Prayer to God. Look at a Man, who is devoted to some *one Thing*, or has some one great worldly Matter at Heart, he stands turn'd from every Thing that has not some Relation to it, he has no Joy or Trouble but what arises from it, he has no Eyes, nor Ears but to see, or hear something about it. All else is a Trifle, but that which some way or other concerns this great Matter. You need not tell him of any Rules, or Methods to keep it in his Thoughts, it goes with him into all Places, and Companies, it has

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his firſt Thoughts in the Morning, and every Day is good or bad, as this great Matter ſeems to ſucceed or not. This may ſhew you how eaſily, how naturally, how conſtantly our Heart will carry on its own State of Prayer, as ſoon as God is its great Object, or it is wholly given up to him, as its one great Good. This may alſo ſhew you, that the Heart cannot enter into a State of the Spirit of Prayer to God, till that which I call'd the firſt *Step* in the ſpiritual Life is taken, which is the taking God for its *All*, or the giving it ſelf up *wholly* to God. But when this Foundation is laid, the Seed of Prayer is ſown, and the Heart is in a continual State of Tendency to God, having no other Delight, or Trouble in Things of any Kind, but as they help, or hinder its Union with God. Therefore, *Academicus*, the Way to be a Man of Prayer, and be govern'd by its Spirit, is not to get a *Book* full of Prayers, but the beſt Help you can have from a Book, is to read one full of ſuch Truths, Inſtructions, and awakening Informations, as force you to ſee, and know *who*, and *what* and *where* you are, that God is your *All*, and that all is *Miſery* but a Heart, and Life devoted to him. This is the beſt outward Prayer Book you can have, as it will turn you to an inward Book, and Spirit

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of Prayer in your Heart, which is a continual longing Desire of the Heart after God, his divine Life, and holy Spirit. When for the Sake of this inward Prayer, you retire at any Time of the Day, never begin till you know and feel, why and wherefore you are going to pray, and let this *why*, and *wherefore* form and direct every Thing that comes from you, whether it be in Thought, or Word. As you cannot but know your own State, so it must be the easiest Thing in the World to look up to God with such Desires as suit the State you are in, and praying in this Manner, whether it be in one, or more, or no Words, your Prayer will be always sincere, and good and highly beneficial to you.——Thus Praying, you can never pray in vain, but one Month in the Practice of it, will do you more Good, make a greater Change in your Soul, than 20 Years of Prayer only by Books, and Forms of other People's making.

No Vice can harbour in you, no Infirmity take any Root, no good Desire can languish, when once your Heart is in this Method of Prayer, never beginning to pray, till you first see how Matters stand within you, asking your Heart what it wants, and having nothing in your Prayers, but what the known State of your Heart puts you upon *demanding*, *saying*, or

offering

offering unto God. A quarter of an Hour of this Prayer brings you out of your Closet a new Man, your Heart feels the Good of it, and every Return of such a Prayer, gives new Life, and Growth to all your Virtues with more Certainty, than the Dew refreshes the Herbs of the Field. Whereas, overlooking this true Prayer of your own Heart, and only at certain Times taking a Prayer that you find in a Book, you have nothing to wonder at, if you are every Day praying, and yet every Day sinking farther and farther under all your Infirmities. For your Heart is your Life, and your Life can only be alter'd by that, which is the real working of your Heart. And if your Prayer is only a Form of Words, made by the Skill of other People, such a Prayer can no more change you into a good Man, than an *Actor* upon the Stage, who speaks kingly Language, is thereby made to be a King. Whereas one Thought, or Word, or Look towards God, proceeding from your own Heart, can never be without its proper Fruit, or fail of doing a real Good to your Soul. Again, another great and infallible Benefit of this Kind of Prayer, is this, it is the only Way to be deliver'd from the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts.

Our Hearts deceive us, becauſe we leave them to themſelves, are abſent from them, taken up in outward Things, in outward Rules and Forms of living and praying. But this Kind of Praying, which takes all its Thoughts, and Words only from the State of our Hearts, makes it impoſſible for us to be Strangers to ourſelves. The Strength of every Sin, the Power of every evil Temper, the moſt ſecret working of our Hearts, the Weakneſs of any, or all our Virtues, is with a Noon-day Clearneſs forced to be ſeen, as ſoon as the Heart is made our Prayer Book, and we pray for nothing, but according to what we read, and find there.

Acad. Oh *Theophilus*, you have ſhewn me, that it is almoſt as eaſy, and natural a Thing to pray, as to *breathe*; and that the beſt Prayer in the World, is that which the Heart can thus eaſily ſend forth from itſelf, untaught by any Thing, but its own Senſe of God, and its ſelf. And yet I am almoſt afraid of loving this Kind of Prayer too much. I am not free from Suſpicions about it, I apprehend it to be that very *praying* by the *Spirit*, or as *moved* by the Spirit, or from a *Light within*, which is condemned, as *Quakeriſm*.

Theoph.

Theoph. There is but one good Prayer, that you can possibly make, and that is a Prayer *in* and *from*, or as the Spirit of God *moves* you in it, or to it. This, this alone is a divine Prayer, no other Prayer has, or can possibly have any Communion with God. Take the Matter thus. Man is a *threefold* Being, he has three Natures, he partakes of the *divine*, the *elementary*, and the *diabolical* Nature. Had he not these three Natures in a certain Degree in him, he could have no Communion with God, he could not enjoy the Elements, nor could the evil Spirits have the least Power of Access to him.

Now the *astral*, *elementary* Nature cannot have a longing after the pure Deity, it cannot Hunger and Thirst after the divine Image, nor desire to be perfect, as God is perfect; this is as impossible, as for the Beasts of the Field to long to be Angels. Therefore Flesh and Blood in us can no more make a *divine* Prayer, than in any other Animal of this World.

The *diabolical* Nature in us, can do nothing but that, which the Devils do. It can only rise up in its own Pride, Envy, and Self-exaltation, and only hate all the Goodness that is either in Heaven, or on Earth. And therefore it is a Truth of the greatest Certain-

ty, that no Man ever did, or can ſend up a divine, and heavenly Prayer to God, or ſuch a Prayer as can reach God, but *in* and *by* the Spirit of God in him. Our *aſtral*, *elementary* Man, and our proud, ſubtle, ſerpentine Nature can read or ſay a Prayer full of good Words and Wiſhes, as eaſily as *Satan* could uſe ſcripture Language in the Temptation of Chriſt; but nothing can *wiſh* to be like God, or to *unite* with his Goodneſs and Holineſs, but that Spirit in us, which partakes of his divine Nature. Therefore to ridicule Praying by the Spirit, or as mov'd by the Spirit, is ridiculing the *one only* Prayer that is divine, or can do us any divine good; and to reject, and oppoſe it, as a vain Conceit, is to quench, and ſuppreſs all that is holy, heavenly, and divine within us. For if this holy Spirit does not live and move in us, and bring forth all the praying Affections of our Souls, we may as well think of reaching Heaven with our Hands as with our Prayers.

Acad. I know not, *Theophilus*, how to deny any Thing that you have here ſaid, yet this Account ſeems to make no Diſtinction between *our own good* Spirit, and the holy Spirit of God. I took the Inſpirations, and Graces of the holy Spirit, to be ſomething

that came into us from *without*, and to be as *distinct* from our own good Spirit, as God is distinct from the Creature.

Theoph. The holy Spirit of God is as necessary to our divine Life, or the Life of Grace, as the *Air* of this World is necessary to our animal Life; and is as *distinct* from us, and as much *without* us, as the *Air* of this World is *distinct* from, and *without* the Creatures, that live in it. And yet *our own* good Spirit, is the *very Spirit* of God moving, and stirring in us. No Animal can unite with, or breathe the Air of this World, till it has first the Air of this World brought forth as the *true Birth* of its own Life in itself; this is its only Capacity to live in the Spirit of this World; and the Breath, or Spirit that thus arises in its own Life, is the *very same* Breath, that is in outward Nature in which it lives. It is strictly thus, with the Spirit of God in our Souls, it must first have a Birth *within us*, arising from the Life of our Souls, and as such is our only Capacity to have Life, and live in the Spirit of God himself, and is the *very Breath* of the Spirit of God, who is yet as distinct from us, as the Breath of our animal Life, that arises from our own Fire, is distinct from the Air of the World in which it lives. And thus, *Academicus*, our *own good* Spirit,

Spirit, is the *very Spirit* of the Deity, and yet not God, but the Spirit of God breath'd or kindl'd into a creaturely Form; and this good Spirit, divine in its *Origin*, and divine in its *Nature*, is that alone in us, that can reach God, unite with him, co-operate with him, be mov'd, and bless'd by him, as our earthly Spirit is, by the outward Spirit of this elementary World.

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have in few Words so gone to the Bottom of this Matter, that nothing is left either for any further Doubt, or Enquiry about it. My own good Spirit is the Breath of God in me, and so related to God, as the Breath of my animal Life is related to the *Air* or Spirit of this outward World. It is from God, has the *Nature*, the *Eternity*, the *Spirituality* of God, as the Breath of my Flesh and Blood has the Grossness, the earthly, transitory Nature of the Spirit of this World. And as all my Communication with this World arises from the Breath of this World, kindled in my *own Life*, so all my Possibility of Communication with God, arises solely from the Breath of his holy Spirit *brought forth* in the Life of my Soul; and I can only live in God by his Spirit having a Birth in me, as I can only live in this World by having its Spirit born in

me. This plain Truth ſets all the Scripture Doctrine concerning the *Neceſſity*, *Power*, and *Operation* of the holy Spirit in the greateſt and moſt edifying Degree of Clearneſs. Thus what can be a more plain, ſober, and palpable Truth, than when the Apoſtle ſaith, *They only are Sons of God who are led by the Spirit of God.* It is only like ſaying, that thoſe Creatures only belong to this World, who live in and by its Spirit. I ſhall here Sir, only add, that my Goſpel Faith ſtands now upon a moſt ſolid, and comfortable Foundation, my Heart is all Delight, and Devotion to God when I conſider, firſt, that Chriſt my Redeemer is the firſt *Seed* of the *Woman*, or *Power of Salvation inſpoken into fallen Adam, the Immanuel, the God within every Man, the Light that lighteth every Man, that cometh into the World. Secondly*, that the holy Spirit of God, the Breath of Eternity, hath alſo *its Seed* of Life in my Soul; for where the *Word*, or *Son* of God is, there is the Spirit of God in the *ſame State*; if one is only a *Seed* of Life, a Spark of Heaven, the other is ſo alſo, and theſe two thus conſider'd, are the glorious *Pearl* of Eternity hidden in every Man's Soul, and ſo often ſpoken of before. And thus we underſtand, how the whole of our Redemption, (according to the

plain

plain Language of Scripture) is *inwardly* and *outwardly*, ſolely the Work of the Light and Spirit of God, a Kingdom of God both *within* and *without* us, and to which we do not, cannot live, but ſo far as we are inſpir'd, mov'd, and led by the Spirit of God. Earneſtly therefore to pray, humbly to hope, and faithfully to expect to be *continually* inſpir'd, and animated by the holy Spirit of God, has no more of *Vanity*, *Fanaticiſm*, or *enthuſiaſtick* Wildneſs in it, than to hope, and pray to act in every Thing from, and by a *good Spirit*. For as ſure as the Lip of Truth hath told us, that there is but *one that is good*, ſo ſure is it, that not a *Spark* of Goodneſs, not a *Breath* of Piety can be in any Creature, either in Heaven, or on Earth, but by that divine Spirit, which is the *Breath* of God, breath'd from himſelf into the Creature. The Matter is not about Appearances of Goodneſs, Forms of Virtue, Rules of Religion, or a prudential Piety, ſuited to Time, and Place and Character, all theſe are Degrees of Goodneſs that our old Man can as eaſily trade in, as in any other Matters of this World. But ſo much as we have of a *heavenly*, and *divine* Goodneſs, or of a Goodneſs that *belongs* to Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it, ſo much we muſt have of a *divine Inſpira-*

tion in us. For as nothing can fall to the Earth, but becauſe it has the Nature of the Earth in it; ſo it is a Truth of the utmoſt Certainty, that nothing can aſcend towards Heaven, or have the leaſt Power to unite with it, but that very Spirit which came down from Heaven, and has the Nature of Heaven in it. This Truth therefore, that the Kingdom of God is within us, that its Light is ſolely the *Lamb* of God, its Spirit ſolely the Spirit of God, ſtands upon a Rock, againſt which all Attempts are in vain. All that I now farther deſire to know, is only this, how I may keep free from all Deluſions in this Matter, and not take my own natural Abilities, Tempers, and Paſſions, or the Suggeſtions of evil Spirits, to be the working of the Spirit of God in me. Pray, Sir, tell me, how I ſhall ſafely know, when and how far I am led, and govern'd by the Spirit of God?

Theoph. You may know this, *Academicus*, juſt as you know, when you are govern'd by the Spirit of Wrath, Envy, Guile, Craft or Covetouſneſs. Every Man knows this of himſelf as eaſily, and as certainly, as he knows when he is hungry, pleas'd, or diſpleas'd. Now it is the ſame Thing with regard to the Spirit of God, the Knowledge of it is as perceptible in yourſelf, and liable to no more

Deluſion. For the Spirit of God is more diſtinguiſhable from all other Spirits and Tempers, than any of your natural Affections, or Tempers are from one another. As I will here plainly ſhew you.

" God is unwearied *Patience*, a *Meekneſs* " that cannot be provok'd, he is an ever en- " during *Mercifulneſs*, he is unmix'd *Good-* " *neſs*, impartial, univerſal *Love*, his De- " light is in the Communication of himſelf, " his own Happineſs, to every Thing, ac- " cording to its Capacity. He does every " Thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, " for its own Sake, becauſe it is good, right- " eous, and lovely. He is the *Good* from " which nothing but Good cometh, and re- " ſiſteth all evil *only* with Goodneſs." This, Sir, is the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God, and here you have your *infallible* Proof, whether you are mov'd and led by the Spirit of God. Here is a Proof that never can fail you, is always at Hand, and is liable to no Miſtake, or Deluſion. If it be the earneſt Deſire, and Longing of your Heart, to be *merciful* as he is merciful, to be full of his *unwearied Patience*, to dwell in his *unalterable Meekneſs*; if you long to be like him in *univerſal*, *impartial* Love; if you deſire to communicate *every Good* to every Creature, that you are able; if

you love and practiſe every Thing that is good, righteous, and lovely, for its *own Sake* becauſe it is good, righteous and lovely, and reſiſt no Evil, but with *Goodneſs*; then you have the utmoſt Certainty, that the Spirit of God liveth, dwelleth, and governeth in you. Now all theſe Tempers are as knowable to every Man, as his own Love and Hatred, and therefore no Man can be deceiv'd as to the Poſſeſſion of them, but he that chuſes to deceive himſelf. Now if you want any of theſe Tempers, if the *whole Bent* of your Heart and Mind is not ſet upon them, all Pretences to an immediate Inſpiration, and *continual* Operation of the Spirit of God in our Soul, are vain and groundleſs. For the Spirit of God is *that*, which I have here deſcrib'd, and where his Spirit dwells, and governs, there all theſe Tempers are brought forth or ſpringing up, as the certain Fruits of it. What room, therefore, *Academicus*, for ſo much Uncertainty, or Fear of Deluſion in this Matter? Keep but within the Bounds here ſet you, call nothing a *Proof* of the Spirit, or Work of God in your Soul, but *theſe Tempers*, and the Works which they produce, and then, but not till then, you may ſafely, and infallibly ſay with St. *John*, *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Acad. Indeed, *Theophilus*, you have given me a ſhort, but very full, and ſatisfactory Anſwer to my Queſtion. I now perceive that as a ſpiritual Man, or one devoted to the Spirit of God, I am not to look after any *Extraordinaries*, any new Openings, Illuminations, Viſions, or Voices inward, or outward from God, as *Proofs* of the Spirit of God dwelling, and working in me; but that all my Proof, and Security of being govern'd by the Spirit of God, is to be grounded on other Matters. That the boundleſs Humility, and Reſignation of the holy Jeſus, the unwearied Patience, the unalterable Meekneſs, the impartial univerſal Love of God, manifeſted in my Soul, are its only Proofs, that God is in me of a Truth. Thus far all is right and good.

But yet, Sir, ſurely it muſt be ſaid with Truth, that the Spirit of God often diſcovers itſelf, and operates in good Souls in very extraordinary Ways, in uncommon Illuminations, and Openings of divine Light and Knowledge, in the Revelation of Myſteries, in ſtrong Impulſes, and Sallies of a wonderful Zeal, full of the higheſt Gifts and Graces of God. And that theſe have frequently been God's gracious Methods of awakening a ſinful World.

Theoph.

Theoph. What you say, *Academicus*, is very true, and almost every Age of the Church is a sufficient Proof of it. By the Goodness of God the Church has always had its extraordinary Persons, highly gifted from above, made burning and shining Lights, and carry'd into as uncommon Ways of Life, by the same Spirit, and for the same Ends, as *John* the *Baptist* was, and as different from common Christians, as he was from the common Jews. But my Friend, these extraordinary Operations of God's holy Spirit, and the Wonders of his Gifts and Graces shewing themselves at certain Times, and upon certain Persons through all the Ages of the Church, are not Matters of common Instruction, they belong not to our Subject, it would be Ignorance and Vanity in me to pretend to let you into the Secret of them, it would be the same Thing in you to think yourself ready for it.

Would you know the *sublime*, the *exalted*, the *angelick* in the Christian Life, see what the Son of God saith, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thyself.* On these two, saith he, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* And without these two Things, no good

Light

Light ever can arise, or enter into your Soul. Take all the Sciences, shine in all the Accomplishments of the letter'd World, they will only lead you from one vain Passion to another; every Thing you send out from within you, is selfish, vain, and bad, every Thing you see, or receive from without, will be receiv'd with a bad Spirit, till *these two* heavenly Tempers have overcome the *natural Perverseness* of fallen Nature. Till then, nothing *pure* can proceed from within, nor any Thing be receiv'd in *Purity* from without.

Think yourself therefore unfit, incapable of judging rightly, or acting virtuously, till these two Tempers have the Government of your Heart. Then every Truth will meet you, no hurtful Error can get Entrance into your Heart; you will neither deceive nor be deceiv'd, but will have a better Knowledge of all divine Matters, than all the human Learning in the World can help you to.

Would you know what it is to love God with all your Heart, and Soul, &c. you need only look back to that which has been said of the *Nature* and *Spirit* of God *. For when with all your *Heart* and *Soul* you love, and long to have that *Nature*, and *Spirit*, to be wholly united to it, possess'd and govern'd

* Page 199.

by

by it, then you love God with all your Heart and Soul, *&c.* And then you are firſt capable of loving yourſelf, and your Neighbour rightly. For, ſo much as you have of the divine Nature and Spirit in you, juſt ſo much Power have you of loving yourſelf, and your Neighbour aright; that is, of loving only and equally that in yourſelf, and your Neighbour, which the Deity *only* and *equally* loves both in you, and him. But it is Time to part, when we have only told our ſilent Friend, *Humanus*, that if we live to meet again, we ſhall with all our Hearts receive him as a Speaker amongſt us.——And ſo, Gentlemen, once more, Adieu.

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Humanus, *Academicus*, *Ruſticus*, and *Theophilus*.

Humanus. O H! *Theophilus*, I muſt yield, and it is with great Pleaſure that I now enter into Converſation with you. You have taken from me all Power of cavilling and diſputeing. I have no Opinions that I chooſe to maintain, but have the utmoſt Deſire of entering further into this Field of Light, which you have ſo clearly opened to my View. I ſhall not trouble you with the Relation of what has paſſed in my Soul, nor

what Struggles I have had, with that Variety of heatheniſh Notions which have had their Turn in my Mind. It is better to tell you, that they are dead and buried, or rather conſumed to nothing by that new Light, which you have opened in ſo many great Points, that I was quite a Stranger to before. To reject all that you have ſaid concerning the Fall of Angels, the Original of this World, the Creation and Fall of Man, and the Neceſſity of a Redemption, as great as that of the Goſpel, is impoſſible; nothing can do it, or ſtand out againſt it, but the moſt wilful and blind Obſtinacy.

But theſe great Points cannot be received in any true Degree, without ſeeing the vain Contention of all thoſe, who either defend or oppoſe the Goſpel without any true and real Knowlege of them. The one contend for, and the other oppoſe, not the Goſpel, but a Syſtem of empty Words, and hiſtorical Facts, branched into Forms and Modes of dividing one Church from another; whereas the Goſpel is no Hiſtory of any *abſent*, *diſtant*, or *foreign* Thing, but is a Manifeſtation of an *eſſential*, *inherent*, *real* Life and Death in every Son of *Adam*; grounded on the Certainty of his firſt angelical Nature, on the Certainty of his real Fall from that,

into

into an animal earthly Life of impure, beſtial Fleſh and Blood, and on the Certainty of an inward Redemption from it, by the divine Nature given again into him. Theſe Three great Points, with all the Doctrines, Duties, and Conſequences, that are eſſentially contained in, or flow from them, are the Goſpel of *Jeſus Chriſt*, to which, by your means, I am become a Convert. I am now, dear *Theophilus*, ſtrongly drawn Two different Ways. Firſt, I am all Hunger and Thirſt after this new Light, a Glimpſe of which has already raiſed me, as it were, from the Dead; and I am in the utmoſt Impatience to hear more and more of this divine Philoſophy, which, I ſo plainly ſee, opens all the Myſteries both of Nature and Grace from the Beginning to the End of Time. What I have heard from you, when I was obliged to be ſilent, and what I have ſince found and felt by much reading the *Appeal*, and that *Dialogue*, obliges me to ſpeak in this ardent Manner. They have awakened ſomething in me which I never felt before, ſomething much deeper than my Reaſon, and over which I have no Power; it glows in my Soul, like a Fire, or Hunger, which nothing can ſatisfy, but a further View of thoſe great Truths, which I this Day expect from

your opening to us the Myſteries of Heaven revealed to that wonderful Man, *Jacob Behmen.*

On the other hand, I find in myſelf a vehement Impulſe to turn Preacher amongſt my former Infidel Brethren; which Impulſe I know not how to reſiſt: For being juſt converted myſelf, I ſeem to know, and feel the *true Place*, from whence Converſion is to ariſe in others; and by the Reluctance which I have felt in my Paſſage from one Side to the other, I ſeem alſo to know the *true Ground* on which Infidelity ſupports itſelf. And he only is able to declare with Spirit and Power any Truths, or bear a faithful Teſtimony of the Reality of them, who preaches nothing but what he has firſt ſeen, and felt, and found to be true, by a living Senſibility and true Experience of their Reality and Power in his own Soul. All other Preaching, whether from Art, Hearſay, Books, or Education, is, at beſt, but playing with Words, and mere trifling with ſacred Things. Being thus divided in myſelf, I hope to have your Direction.——

Theophilus. Dear *Humanus*, my Heart embraces you with great Joy, and I am much pleaſed with what you ſay of yourſelf. This *Hunger* of your Soul is all that I wiſh for;

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it is the *Fire* of God, the *Opening* of Eternity, the *Beginning* of your Redemption, the *Awakener* of the angelic Life, the *Root* of an omnipotent Faith, and the *true Seeker* of all that is loſt. For all theſe Things, and much more, are the bleſſed Powers which will ſoon break forth, and ſhew themſelves to be the true Workings of this celeſtial Fire, that has begun to glow within you.

Your Buſineſs is now to give Way to this heavenly Working of the Spirit of God in your Soul, and turn from every thing either within you, or without you, that may hinder the farther Awakening of all that is holy and heavenly within you. For within you is that heavenly Angel that died in Paradiſe, and died no other Death, than that of being hid a while from your Sight and Senſibility.

For be aſſured of this, as a certain Truth, that corrupt, fallen, and earthly as human Nature is, there is nevertheleſs in the Soul of every Man, the Fire, and Light, and Love of God, though lodged in a State of Hiddenneſs, Inactivity, and Death, till ſomething or other, human or divine, *Moſes* and the Prophets, *Chriſt* or his Apoſtles, diſcover its Life within us.

For the Soul of every Man is the Breath and Life of the Triune God, and as such a Partaker of the divine Nature; but all this Divinity is unfelt, because overpowered by the Workings of Flesh and Blood, till such time as Distress, or Grace, or both, give Flesh and Blood a Shock, open the long shut-up Eyes, and force a Man to find something in himself, that Sense and Reason, whilst at quiet, were not aware of. Wonder not therefore at this Conflict in your Soul, that you are eager after more Light, and impatient to communicate that which you have. For you must be thus driven; and both these Desires are only Two Witnesses to this Truth, that a heaven-born Spirit is come to Life in you.

Only remember this; Look well to the Ground on which you stand, keep a watchful Eye upon every Working of Nature, and take care that nothing human, earthly, private, or selfish, mix with this heavenly Fire: That is, see that your Mind be *free*, *universal*, *impartial*, without Regard to here or there, this or that, but loving all Goodness, practising every Virtue, for itself, on its own Account, because it is so much of God; neither coveting Light, nor longing to communicate it to others, but merely and solely

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for this Reaſon, that the Will of God may be done, and the Goodneſs of God brought to Life both in you and them. For there is no Goodneſs but God's; and his Goodneſs is not alive, or fruitful in you, but ſo far, and in ſuch Degree, as the Good that you mean, and do, is done in and by that Spirit, by which God himſelf is good. For as there is but One that is good, ſo there is, and can be but One Goodneſs. And therefore it is, that we are called not to an human, worldly, prudential, partial Goodneſs, ſuitable to our ſelfiſh Reaſon, and natural Tempers, but to *be perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect.* And the full Reaſon is expreſſed in the Words; for if our Father is in Heaven, we muſt be there too in Spirit and Life, or we are not his Children; if Heaven is that for which we are made, and that which we have loſt, it is not any human Goodneſs, but a heavenly Birth and Spirit of God's own Goodneſs, working in us, as it does in God, that can make us the heavenly Children of our Father in Heaven. You muſt love the Light of God, as God loves it; you muſt deſire that others may enjoy it, as God deſires it. Now God is a free, univerſal, impartial Love, loving and doing every kind of Good, for its own Sake, becauſe that is the

highest and most perfect Working of Life; and because every thing else but Goodness, for its own Sake, is imperfect, and a Degree of Evil, Misery, and Death. And no Creature can come out of its Imperfection, Misery, and Death, but by the pure, free, unmixt Goodness of God, being born in it. Though you had outwardly all Virtues, and seemed doing all that the Saints of God have done, yet unless the *same Spirit*, by which God himself is Good, brought forth your Goodness, all would be only an earthly Labour, that could have no Communication with Heaven.

Therefore, my Friend, set out right, and be assured of this Truth, that *Nature*, and *Self*, and every *particular View*, must be totally renounced; or else, be your Zeal what it will, ever so pleasing to yourself, or astonishing to the World, you are not working with God.

Here now you have the Test of Truth, by which you may always know, whether it be the Spirit of God, and the Love of God, that drives you. If your Zeal is after this *pure*, free, *universal* Goodness of God, then of a Truth the Spirit of God breatheth in you; but if you feel not the Love of this pure, free, universal Goodness, and yet think that

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you love God, you deceive yourſelf; for there is no other true Love of God, but the loving *that*, which God is.

But if you pleaſe, *Humanus*, pray tell me, in what manner you would attempt to make Converts to Chriſtianity.

Humanus. I would not take the Method generally practiſed by the modern Defenders of Chriſtianity. I would not attempt to ſhew from *Reaſon* and *Antiquity*, the Neceſſity and Reaſonableneſs of a divine Revelation in general, or of the *Moſaic* and Chriſtian in particular. Nor enlarge upon the Arguments for the Credibility of the Goſpel-Hiſtory, the Reaſonableneſs of its Creeds, Inſtitutions, and Uſages; or the Duty of Man to receive Things above, but not contrary to, his Reaſon. I would avoid all this, becauſe it is wandering from the true Point in Queſtion, and only helping the Deiſt to oppoſe the Goſpel with a Shew of Argument, which he muſt neceſſarily want, was the Goſpel left to ſtand upon its own Bottom.

And, on the other hand, ſhould the Deiſt yield up ſuch a Cauſe as this, and change Sides, he could only be ſaid to have changed his Opinion about Facts, without any more altering or bettering his State in God, than if he

he had only altered his Opinion about Things in Diſpute amongſt the antient Philoſophers.

For ſince the *Fall* of Man, implying a real Change from his firſt State, or a total Death to his firſt created Life, ſince the Neceſſity of a new Birth of that loſt Life, by the Life of God again reſtored to, or born in the Soul, are *two Points*, quite overlooked by thoſe who defend the Truth and Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Scheme, it may truly be ſaid, that the *only Ground*, and *whole Nature* of the Goſpel is quite dropt and given up by thoſe who thus defend it.

For the Goſpel has but *one Ground*, or Reaſon, and that is the Fall of Man, it has but *one Nature*, and that is to help Man again to *all* that he had loſt.

How unreaſonable would it be, to offer the Chriſtian Redemption to glorious Angels in Heaven? Could any thing be more inconſiſtent with their heavenly, unfallen State? Yet juſt ſo unreaſonable would it be to offer it to Man unfallen from his firſt created State —— For Man ſtanding in that firſt Perfection of Life, which God breathed into him, and in that very outward State, or World, into which God himſelf brought him, wants no more Redemption, than the moſt glorious Angels do; and to preach to ſuch a Man, in or-

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der to be reconciled to God, the Neceſſity of dying to himſelf, and the World he is in, would be as contrary to all Senſe and Reaſon, as to preach to Angels the Neceſſity of dying to themſelves, their divine Life and the Kingdom of Heaven, for which God had created them.

Thus does it appear, that the Fall of Man, into the Life of this earthly World, is the ſole Ground of his wanting the Redemption, which the Goſpel offers.

Hence it is that the Goſpel has only one ſimple Propoſal of certain Life, or certain Death to Man; of Life, if he will take the Means of entering into the Kingdom of God, of Death if he chooſes to take up his Reſt in the Kingdom of this World. This is the ſimple Nature, and ſole Drift of the Goſpel; it means no more, than making known to Man, that this World, and the Life of it, is his Fall, and Separation from God, and Happineſs, both here and hereafter: And that to be ſaved or reſtored to God and Happineſs, can only be obtained, by renouncing all Love, and Adherence to the Things of this World. Look at all the Precepts, Threatenings and Doctrines of the Goſpel, they mean nothing, but to drive all Earthly-mindedneſs and carnal Affections out of the Soul, to call Man

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from the Life, Spirit and Goods of this World, to a Life of Hope, and Faith, and Truſt, and Love and Deſire of a new Birth from Heaven.

To embrace the Goſpel is to enter with all our Hearts into its Terms of dying to all that is earthly both within us, and without us; and on the other hand to place our Faith, and Hope, and Truſt, and Satisfaction in the Things of this World, is to reject the Goſpel with our whole Heart, Spirit and Strength, as much as any Infidel can do, notwithſtanding we made ever ſo many verbal Aſſents and Conſents to every thing that is recorded in the New Teſtament.

This therefore is the one true eſſential Diſtinction between the Chriſtian and the Infidel. The Infidel is a Man of this World, wholly devoted to it, his Hope and Faith are ſet upon it; for where our Heart is, there, and there only is our Hope and Faith. He has only ſuch Virtue, ſuch Goodneſs, and ſuch a Religion, as entirely ſuits with the Intereſt of Fleſh and Blood, and keeps the Soul happy in the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life: This, and this alone, is *Infidelity*, a *total Separation* from God, and a Removal of all Faith, and Hope from him, into the Life of

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this World. It matters not, whether this Infidel be a *Profeſſor* of the Goſpel, a Diſciple of *Zoroaſter*, a Follower of *Plato*, a *Jew*, a *Turk*, or an Oppoſer of the Goſpel-Hiſtory: This Difference of Opinions or Profeſſions alters not the Matter, it is the Love of the World inſtead of God, that conſtitutes the *whole Nature* of the Infidel.

On the other hand, the Chriſtian renounces the World, as his horrid Priſon; he dies to the Will of Fleſh and Blood, becauſe it is Darkneſs, Corruption, and Separation from God; he turns from all that is earthly, animal, and temporal, and ſtands in a continual Tendency of Faith, and Hope, and Prayer to God, to have a better Nature, a better Life and Spirit born again into him from above.

Where this Faith is, there is the Chriſtian, the new Creature in Chriſt, born of the Word and Spirit of God; neither Time nor Place, nor any outward Condition of Birth, and Life, can hinder his Entrance into the Kingdom of God.

But where this Faith is not, there is the *true, complete* Infidel, the Man of the Earth, the Unredeemed, the Rejector of the Goſpel, the Son of Perdition, that is *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, without Chriſt, an Alien from the Commonwealth of Iſrael, a Stranger from*

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the Covenants of Promiſe, having no Hope, and without God in the World.

Here therefore I fix my true Ground of converting Men to Chriſtianity; and how miſerably, may I ſay, do they err, who place Chriſtianity and Infidelity in any thing elſe, but in the Heart either devoted to this World, or devoted to God!

He therefore that opens a Field of Controverſy to the *Deiſt*, about Revelation in general, or the Hiſtory of Facts, Creeds, and Doctrines of Churches, not only leads him from the Merits of the Goſpel, but brings him into a Field of Battle, where he may ſtand his Ground as long as he pleaſes. This I can truly ſay from my own Experience, who have been 20 Years in this Duſt of Debate; and have always found that the more Books there were written in *this Way* of defending the Goſpel, the more I was furniſhed with new Objections to it, and the leſs apprehenſive of any Danger from my not receiving it.

For I had frequently a Conſciouſneſs riſing up within me, that the Debate was equally vain on both Sides, doing no more real Good to the one than to the other, not being able to imagine, that a Set of ſcholaſtic, logical Opinions about Hiſtory, Facts, Doctrines,

and Inſtitutions of the Church, or a Set of logical Objections againſt them, were of any Significancy toward making the Soul of Man either an eternal Angel of Heaven, or an eternal Devil of Hell. And therefore it was, that I was often tempted rather to think, there was neither Heaven, nor Hell, than to believe that ſuch a Variety of Churches, and Syſtems of Opinion, all condemning, and all condemned by one another, were to find the Heaven of God opened to receive them, but he who was equally led by Opinion to reject them all, was doomed to Hell. But you, Sir (and how can I enough thank you for it?) have put a full End to all this vain Strife of Opinions floating in the Brain; You have diſperſed the Clouds that ſurrounded my bewildered Mind; You have brought me home to myſelf, where I find Heaven and Hell, Life and Death, Salvation and Damnation at Strife within me; You have ſhewn me the infinite Worth of Chriſtianity, and the dreadful Nature of Infidelity, not by helping me to a new Opinion, for my *Reaſon* to maintain, but by proving to me this great and deciſive Truth, that Chriſtianity is neither more nor leſs, *than the Goodneſs of the divine Life, Light and Love, living and working in my Soul*; and that Infidelity in its whole Nature,

ture, is purely and ſolely *the Heart of Man living in, governed by, and contented with the evil Workings of the earthly Life, Spirit and Nature.*

This is the Infidelity that you have forced me to fly from, and renounce, and *that* is the Chriſtianity, to which I am converted with all the Strength of my Heart and Spirit. Away then with all the Fictions and Workings of Reaſon, either for, or againſt Chriſtianity! They are only the wanton Sport of the Mind, whilſt ignorant of God, and inſenſible of its own Nature and Condition. Death and Life are the only Things in Queſtion; *Life* is God, living and working in the Soul; *Death* is the Soul living and working according to the Senſe and Reaſon of beſtial Fleſh and Blood. Both this Life, and this Death are of their own Growth, growing from their own Seed within us, not as buſy Reaſon talks or directs, but as our Heart turns either to the one or the other.

But, dear *Theophilus*, I muſt now tell you that I want to make haſte in this new Road you have put me in. Time is ſhort, I am afraid of leaving the World, before I have left all worldly Tempers, and before the firſt holy and heavenly Birth be quickened, and brought to Life in me.

An Angel my first Father was created, and therefore nothing but the Angel belongs to Man, and nothing but the Angel can enter into Heaven. Angelic Goodness, therefore, is the one Thing that Man must look up into God for, because it is the one Goodness that he has lost. Every thing else, Flesh and Blood, Earth and all earthly Tempers, every thing that had its Rise from the Fall of *Adam*, must be renounced, and given up to Death, that the first angelic Glory of the Life of God in Man may be again found in him.

Theophilus. Indeed, *Humanus*, you have made great Haste already; for all the Haste that we can make, consists in a total dying to all the Tempers and Passions which we have received from the Spirit of this World, by our Fall into it. And the more watchfully, earnestly, and constantly, we do this, the more Haste we make to our lost Country, and heavenly Glory.

It is no Extravagance, or overstraining the Matter, when we say, that our Goodness must be angelic; for no Goodness less than that, can be divine and heavenly, or help us to a Life in Heaven. It is often said, that we are poor, infirm Men, and not Angels; and therefore must be content with the Poverty and Infirmity of human Virtues. That

we are poor, infirm Men, is undeniable; but this is the one infallible Reaſon, why a Virtue that is according to our Nature, or of its own Growth, can do us no Good. We were not created poor and infirm Men by God, but have loſt him, are ſeparated from him; full of Miſery, becauſe we have chang'd our firſt State, and brought all this Poverty, Corruption, and Infirmity, upon ourſelves. And therefore, as this Infirmity is from ourſelves, ſo we muſt intend nothing leſs, or ſhort of the total Removal of it, nor think that we have our proper Goodneſs, till we ſtand in that Degree of it, in which God created us. For, be aſſured of this great Truth, that nothing in us can be the Delight of God, but that very Creature, which he created. All therefore muſt be parted with, that God hath not created and brought to Life in us. And no Goodneſs but that of an Angel, can overcome the Evil that is in us, or do the Will of God on Earth, as it is done in Heaven, which is the only Goodneſs in and for which God created us.

Academicus. Pray, *Theophilus*, give me leave to ſay, that I ſhould think it better, not to inſiſt ſo much upon the Word *Angelic*, when you ſpeak of the Goodneſs, that ought to be ours. For it ſeems to me too liable to

Obejection.

Objection. We have not the high Faculties, and exalted Powers, of Angels; and therefore our Goodneſs cannot riſe up to an Equality with theirs.

Ruſticus. Pray, *Academicus*, give me leave alſo to ſay, that if your Learning did not lead you to mind Words, more than Things, you could not have fallen into this critical Scruple. For our Call to angelic Goodneſs does not ſuppoſe or require any high Stretch, or refined Elevation, of our intellectual Faculties and Powers. A *Shepherd* watching over his Flock, a poor *Slave* digging in the Mines, may each of them, though ſo employed to the End of their Lives, ſtand before God in a Degree of Goodneſs truly angelic. On the other hand, you may ſpend all your Time in high Speculations, writing and preaching upon Chriſtian Perfection, compoſing Seraphic Hymns of heavenly Matters, with a Strength of Thought and Genius that delights both yourſelf and others, and yet, ſo doing to the Day of your Death, have only a Goodneſs like that of eating and drinking that which moſt pleaſes your Palate.

Would you know the true Nature of angelic Goodneſs, ſee how the Spirit of Chriſt ſpeaks, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, Soul, and Strength, and thy*

Neighbour as thyself. I came into the World not to do my own Will, not to seek my own Glory or Honour, not to have a Kingdom in this World, but to promote the Kingdom of God, and do the Will of my Father in Heaven. My Meat and Drink is to do the Will of him that sent me. When thou makest a Feast, call not thy rich Friends and Acquaintance, but the poor, the lame, and blind, &c. Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory and Praise of God. Thus speaks the Spirit of Christ; and he that in this Spirit thus lives, is an Angel, whether he be in Heaven, or inclosed in Flesh and Blood. And all of us are in the Way of attaining to this angelic Goodness, as soon as we hate the selfish Tempers of our own earthly Life, and earnestly long, in the Spirit of Prayer, to have the Life of God brought forth in us. Now this Goodness we must have, or we have none at all; for there is but one *God*, one *Good*, and one *Goodness*; and it is rightly called Angelic, because nothing is capable of it, but the heavenly angelic Nature; nor can it have any Existence in Man, till the Workings of our earthly Nature are overcome, and brought into Subjection to *that* Spirit, which is not of Man, but from Heaven. For Flesh and Blood, in all its Workings, can work only

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for itſelf; Darkneſs can only be dark, it has no other Nature; Coldneſs can only be cold; Earth can only be earthly; and the Works of Light can only proceed from Light. Fleſh and Blood, or that Life which is only from the Stars and Elements of this World, can only work as the Stars and Elements work, only for Time, and a corruptible Life; it can only be beſtial, and ſerve the Ends of a beſtial Life; it is inſenſible and incapable of divine Virtue, and is, and can be of no higher a Nature in a Man, than in a Beaſt, and muſt have the ſame End in both. It is quite incapable of entering into the Kingdom of God; and only for this Reaſon, becauſe it is abſolutely incapable of having any true and heavenly Goodneſs. It has then only its proper Goodneſs, when it has loſt its Power of acting, and is governed by a Spirit ſuperior to it; whilſt it lives and rules, it can only live to itſelf; is nothing but an earthly own Will, own Love, own Honour, own Intereſt, never riſing higher, doing better, or coming any nearer to Goodneſs, than its own Pride or Covetouſneſs, Envy or Wrath, can carry it. For theſe Tempers, with all their leſſer Subdiviſions, are the *Atmoſphere* that ſets Bounds to the Breath of the earthly Life; they are eſſential to it, and as inſeparable from it, as

Hardneſs and Darkneſs are inſeparable from a Rock of Stone. So long as the ſtony Rock laſts, ſo long is it hard and dark. And ſo long as earthly Fleſh and Blood lives and acts, it can only live and act for itſelf; it can ſeek, love, like, or do no manner of Thing, but as its own Will, own Love, own Intereſt, is ſome way or other felt, and found in it. Would you know the true Ground and Reaſon of this? It is becauſe no Life can go out of, or farther than itſelf; nor can it will any thing, but what its own Life is. This is abſolutely true of every Life, whether it be divine, earthly, or helliſh; it can ſeek, love, and delight in nothing, but that which is according to its own Life.

See here, *Academicus*, the Folly of your quarrelling with the Word *Angelic*, ſince the Thing itſelf, angelic Goodneſs, is abſolutely neceſſary; it is the Goodneſs of our firſt Creation, and muſt be the Goodneſs of our Redemption. The falling from it has brought forth all the Evils that we are ſurrounded with, and nothing can deliver us from the Death of our fallen State, but a true and full Reſurrection of all that Purity and Goodneſs, which was living in the firſt Creation of Man. To be content with our Infirmities, is to be content with our Separation from God; and

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not to aſpire after the one angelic Goodneſs, is to be *Carnally-minded*, which we are told, *is Death*, that is, Death to the one divine Life.

A Virtue that is only according to the State of this earthly Life, is a Virtue of Art, and human Contrivance, a Fiction of Behaviour, modelled according to Rule and Cuſtom, or Education, that can go no deeper, nor riſe higher, nor reach farther, than the Senſe and Reaſon, and Intereſts of Fleſh and Blood, can carry it. But this can have no Communication with God and Heaven, becauſe it is not born of them, but is a lower, ſeparate State of Life, that at beſt can only bring forth a Civility of outward Manners, little better than ſuch a new Birth as may be had from a Dancing-maſter. But the Goodneſs which we want, and which we were created to have, is the one holy bleſſed Life of God, and Chriſt, and Heaven, living in the Soul. For from Eternity to Eternity, there never was, or ever can be, any other heavenly Goodneſs in any Creature, but the Life, and Spirit, and Word of God, ſpeaking, living, and breathing in it.

Bid the *Anatomiſt*, that can ſkilfully diſſect an human Body, that can tell you the Names, Nature, and Offices of moſt of its Parts, that

can ſhew you how they all conſpire to give Life, Strength, and Motion, to the living Machine: Bid him, I ſay, put Life into the dead Carcaſe.

Now learned Reaſon, when pretending to be a Maſter of Morality, is juſt as powerful as this very Anatomiſt. It can ſkilfully diſſect a dead Syſtem of Morality, can ſeparate all its Parts, tell you the Names, Nature, Diſtinctions, and Connections, of moſt kinds of Good and Evil. But when this is done, learned Reaſon, with all its Dictates, Diſtinctions, and Definitions, can do juſt as much Good to the Soul, that has loſt its Goodneſs, as the Anatomiſt can do to the Carcaſe, that has loſt its Life.

It is wonderfully aſtoniſhing, that you Men of Learning ſeldom come thus far, as to ſee, and feel this glaring Truth, that Goodneſs muſt be a *living* Thing; but, blinded with the empty Sounds of Words in Variety of Languages, are as content and happy *with a Religion of Nature delineated*, or a Book of *Axioms*, *Maxims*, and *Deductions*, mathematically placed one after another, as if you had really found the Tree of Life. Whereas, in Truth, all this is no better than the Reading a Lecture upon the Uſe of the Heart,

Heart, Liver, and Lungs, to a dead Carcaſe: For the Life of Goodneſs can no more be raiſed, or brought into the Soul, by this Art of Reaſoning, than Life can be brought into the Carcaſe, by a Diſcourſe upon the Heart, Liver, and Lungs, made over it.

Oh! *Academicus*, forget your Scholarſhip, give up your Art and Criticiſm, be a plain Man, and then the firſt Rudiments of Senſe may teach you, that there, and there only, can Goodneſs be, where it comes forth as a *Birth of Life*, and is the free natural Work and Fruit of *that* which lives within us. For till Goodneſs thus comes from a *Life* within us, we have in Truth none at all. For Reaſon, with all its Doctrine, Diſcipline, and Rules, can only help us to be ſo good, ſo changed, and amended, as a wild Beaſt may be, that by Reſtraints and Methods is taught to put on a Sort of Tameneſs, though its wild Nature is all the time only reſtrained, and in a Readineſs to break forth again as Occaſion ſhall offer.

Thus far the Maſters of Morality and human Diſcipline may go; they may tame and reform the outward Man, cloathe him with the Appearance of many Images of Virtue, which will, ſome or all of them, be put off, juſt as Time, Occaſion, and Fleſh and Blood, require

it,

it. For the Goodneſs of a living Creature muſt be its own Life; it muſt ariſe up in it as its own Love, or any Paſſion doth; juſt as the Fierceneſs of the Tyger, and the Meekneſs of the Lamb, are the Birth of their own Life. And if Goodneſs is not our *natural* Birth from our natural Parents, we muſt of all Neceſſity be born again from a Principle above Nature, or no Goodneſs can be living in us. Now ſince Goodneſs is a Life, we have a Twofold Proof, that no Goodneſs can be living in us, till we are born again of the *Word* and Spirit of God: For Nature, as well as Scripture, aſſures us, that God is originally the *One Good*, and the *One Life*; and therefore no good Life can poſſibly be in us, but by the Word, Life, and Spirit, of God having a Birth in us. And from this Birth alone it is, that the free, genuine Works of Goodneſs flow forth with the Freedom of the Divine Life, wherewith the Spirit of God has made us free; loving and doing all manner of Good, merely for Goodneſs-ſake; virtuous in all kind of Virtue, purely for Virtue-ſake: Then we are the natural true Children of our heavenly Father, and do the Works of Heaven with a chearful and willing Mind. Then it is, that we are good in the Manner as God is good, becauſe it is his

Goodneſs

Goodneſs that is born in us; we are perfect as he is perfect, we love as he loves, are patient as he is patient, we give as he gives, we forgive as he forgives, and reſiſt Evil only with Good as he does.

This, *Academicus*, is angelic Goodneſs; and is the Goodneſs of thoſe who are born again of the *Word*, and become new Creatures in the Spirit of *Chriſt*.—This Goodneſs our firſt Father loſt, when he choſe to have the Eyes of Fleſh and Blood, and the Spirit of this World, opened in him; and therefore our Redeemer, who well knew what we had loſt, and muſt have again, has taught us in our daily Prayer, to aſk for angelic Goodneſs in theſe Words; *viz. Thy Kingdom come; thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.* But I have done, and I think you muſt have done, with your learned Scruple about the Word *angelic*. And now, *Theophilus*, if you pleaſe, return to your Subject with *Humanus*.

Theophilus. Let me then tell you, *Humanus*, that I much approve of the Way that you intend to proceed in. You are come directly to the Truth and Heart of the Matter, and have hit upon the One only Method of putting *Deiſm* to a full Stand, by reducing Chriſtianity to this One ſingle great Point, which

which so evidently contains the whole Ground and Nature of it.

Now this One great Point consists of Two essential Parts; 1st, the Fall of Man from a divine angelic Life into an earthly, bestial, corruptible, miserable Life of this World. 2dly, The Redemption of Man, or his regaining his first angelic Perfection, by a new Birth of the Divine Nature, by the *Word* and Spirit of God. Stand steadily upon this true Christian Ground; and then you will not only stand safely yourself, but you will have left the Deist no Ground to stand upon. For here all the laboured Volumes of Infidelity, with which these last Ages have swarmed, are at once rendered useless, and cannot put so much as a little Finger into this Debate. Consult all, from *Hobbes* to the *Moral Philosopher*, and you consult in vain; their Works are as dead as themselves, and unable to give forth one Word against this Christianity. They had a much easier Task upon their Hands; for nothing can be easier than for Reason to object, and continue objecting, to the extraordinary Matters of the Old and New Testament. I don't mention this as an Accusation of the Deists, or to charge them with the crafty Contrivance of placing the Merits of the Cause where it is not. No,

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the Learning of the Chriſtian World muſt bear the Blame of the fruitleſs Diſputes: The Demonſtrators of the Truth and Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity have betrayed their own Cauſe, and left true Chriſtianity unmentioned in their Defences of it. What a Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity have ſome great Names helped us to? Juſt as uſeful, and good to our fallen Souls, as the Reaſonableneſs of conſenting to the Death of *Pharaoh* and his Hoſt in the *Red Sea*. But you, my Friend, being rightly converted to a Chriſtianity, that began before the Scriptures were written, and is as old as the Creation and Fall of Man; keep cloſe to its true and real Ground; and, inſtead of ſhewing the Reaſonableneſs of beleiving a long Hiſtory of Things, ſhew the abſolute Neceſſity of Man's dying to his preſent Life, in order to have a better from God. This is the Chriſtianity that began with the Fall, and has been preached ever ſince to every Son of fallen Man, in every Corner of the World; and by the ſame Preacher that tells every Man, that he ought to be better than he is. For was not Man fallen from a better State than that he is now in, he could no more be aſhamed or offended at any thing that his Nature prompts him to do, than the Ox is aſhamed at breaking into a good Paſture.

ſture. Every Man therefore, from the Beginning of the World, has had Chriſtianity and the Goſpel written and preached within him; as it contains the Fall of Man, and his Want of being raiſed to a better State. But as we ſee, that the Truth and Reality of his Fall, and the Truth and Reality of his Redemption by a real Birth from above, can be loſt, nay diſowned, amongſt thoſe that are daily reading and expounding the Scriptures; ſo it is no wonder that the ſame ſhould have happened to thoſe, who had no Scriptures to read. Juſtly therefore, *Humanus*, are Churches and Creeds, Doctrines above and contrary to Reaſon, Miracles of the Old and New Teſtament, and all hiſtorical Facts and Matters, which are ſo great an Harveſt to the Deiſts; juſtly, I ſay, are they removed by you out of the Debate; and the One great Point above-mentioned only inſiſted upon, as the Whole of the Matter. For this One Point gained, all is gained; and, till this Point is cleared up, all the reſt is but a Debate about nothing.

For if Man is fallen from a divine Life, no one need be told, that he can only be redeemed or ſaved from his Fall by having the ſame Divine Life born in him again, or a Second time. Nothing therefore touches the

Truth

Truth of the Debate betwixt the Chriſtian and the Infidel, but that which proves with Certainty, that Man has, or has not, loſt a Divine Life.

If he is thus fallen, has died this Death to a Divine Life; then the Nature and Neceſſity of the Chriſtian New-birth ſufficiently proves itſelf. But if it can be proved, that he is not thus fallen, but ſtands in that State and Degree of Life in which God created him; the Deiſts have Reaſon enough to reject the Chriſtian Scheme of Redemption.

Strange it is therefore beyond Expreſſion, that every Man, whether Chriſtian or Infidel, ſhould not ſee, that here lies the Whole of the Matter; or that any learned Defender of Chriſtianity ſhould think of beginning any where, or in any thing, but where the Redemption itſelf begins; or imagine there can be the leaſt Ground to propoſe a Redemption to Man, till he ſhews *Why*, and from *What*, he is to be redeemed. Stranger is it ſtill, if you conſider, that Chriſtians have nothing to excuſe their wandering from this One great Point, ſince both the Teſtaments bear ſo open a Witneſs to it. *In the Day that thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt ſurely die*, ſays the Old Teſtament. *Except a Man be born again from above, of the Word and Spirit*

Spirit of God, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, says the New Testament.

Thus do these Two Testaments begin with the most open Declarations of these Two Things; *viz.* The Death of Man to his First created Life: 2dly, His Redemption only and solely by a real Birth of the Divine Life, received again from above. What Excuse therefore can be made for those who read the Scripture, and yet overlook that very One Point; not only so plainly declared, but which, in itself, is the One only Ground and Foundation upon which all the Scripture stands? For had not Man died, neither *Moses*, nor the *Prophets*, had ever been in Being. For Man not fallen, but abiding in his first created Perfection of Life, had been as free from any outward Law, as the Light is from Darkness. The keeping his own Nature had been the keeping, and doing, and seeing, and knowing all that God required of him. So that neither Law nor Prophecy have any Ground or Reason, but because Man is dead to his first Life.

But seeing Man is dead to his first Life, and living only in an earthly bestial World, under the Power and Slavery of the evil Motions and Tempers of gross Flesh and Blood; therefore *Moses* must come with his

Law,

Law, to ſet Sin before him, and give him Precepts of reſiſting and dying to all the Luſts of this new earthly Life, which he is fallen into: Therefore, to ſeek for any other Learning in or from *Moſes*, than that of learning to reſiſt and die to the Tempers and Paſſions of this earthly Life, is knowing nothing right of *Moſes*, nor of ourſelves.

Next after *Moſes* came the *Prophets*, or the Spirit of Prophecy, with its *far-ſeeing Sight*, and Declaration of Glories to come. Now the Ground of Prophecy is this, it is becauſe Man is to be *reſtored* to his firſt glorious State; and therefore the Spirit of Prophecy comes forth from God to awaken *Hope* and *Faith*, Expectation and Deſire in Man; becauſe theſe are the only Powers that can draw him out of the Mire of the earthly Life, in which he ſticks, and carry him up to his firſt heavenly State again. Nothing therefore is to be ſought for in or from the Prophets, but the Increaſe of our Hope, Faith, and Deſire of the *New Birth* of that glorious Life which we have loſt, and they foretold was to be had again.

Thus, my Friend, you ſee the Imporance of this One Point; *Moſes* and the Prophets have no Ground or Reaſon but this, that Man has loſt his Divine Life; and that

this ſame Divine Life is to be born again in him. Now ſeeing this is the Ground and Reaſon of the Scriptures, therefore is it the one unerring Key to the right Uſe of them. They have only this one Intent, to make Man know, reſiſt, and abhor the Working of his fallen earthly Nature; and to turn the Faith, Hope, and longing Deſire of his Heart to God: And therefore we are only to read them with this View, and to learn this one Leſſon from them. Whatever therefore occurs, that cannot be turned to this general End, but relates only to ſome temporal, occaſional, or private Matter, is of no more Importance to us, than the Cloak and Parchments which St. *Paul* ſpeaks of.

How many hundred Barns muſt there be, to hold all the learned Volumes, that had never been written, had Man looked upon the Scriptures as having no other View or End, but to teach him to renounce the Tempers of his fallen earthly Nature, and live unto God in Faith and Prayer; to be born again of the Divine Nature! But this one End being overlooked by learned Reaſon, *Hebrew* and *Syriac*, *Arabic*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, have been called in, to torture the Scriptures into a Chaos of confuſed Opinions, that has covered the Chriſtian World with Darkneſs,

and

and loſt the only Good that was to be had from the written Word of God. Whereas, ſtanding upon the Ground on which you ſtand, with only this one great Point at Heart, the Scriptures are a plain, eaſy, and certain Inſtruction; and no honeſt unlearned Heart ſtands in need of any Commentator to help him to all the Benefit that can be had from Scripture, or ſecure him from any hurtful Error.

Humanus. Indeed, *Theophilus*, my own Experience can bear a full Teſtimony to the Truth of all that you have ſaid. For upon my reading now the New Teſtament, with this Key in my Hand; *viz.* of Man thus fallen, and thus called to a new Birth from Heaven; every thing I read in it has Spirit and Life, and overflows my Soul with ſuch an Unction, and Senſibility of ſweet Doctrine, as I am not able to expreſs. For whilſt I conſider it only as written to drive all earthly Tempers and Paſſions out of the Soul, and inflame the Heart with Love and Deſire of the *Grace*, the *Spirit*, the *Light* and *Life* of the heavenly Nature, I can ſay, as the *Jewiſh* Officers did, Never Man ſpoke like *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles.

Why was the Son of God made Man? It was becauſe Man was to be made again a

divine Creature. Why did Man want ſuch a Saviour? It was becauſe he was become earthly, mortal, groſs Fleſh and Blood. Now take *Chriſt* in this Light, and conſider Man in this State, and then all that is ſaid in the Goſpel ſtands in the fulleſt Light.

Thus, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refreſh you.* How poor, how mean, and uncertain a Senſe is there in this, till you know, that Man has loſt his Divine Nature, and is fallen into a World that is all *Labour*, *Burden*, and *Miſery!* But as ſoon as this is known, then how eaſy, how plain, is the full and higheſt Senſe of theſe Words, *Come unto me, all that labour, are weary and heavy laden, and I will refreſh you!*—I will bring to Life that firſt happy State which you have loſt. This is the *Note*, the *Paraphraſe*, the *Expoſitor*, the *Key* to the true Senſe of every Doctrine of *Chriſt*; which, though variouſly expreſt to awaken the Heart, is only one and the ſame Thing. Thus, *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.* But why ſo? Becauſe he that is troubled at the Corruption, Vanity, and Impurity of his fallen earthly State, has the Comfort of the heavenly Life ready for him. Again, *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs,*

ouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled. How plain and great is the Senſe here, as ſoon as we know, that *Chriſt* is our Righteouſneſs; and that the righteous Life of *Chriſt* in the Soul, is that Life which our firſt Father loſt! Therefore, to hunger and thirſt after this Righteouſneſs, is the one Way to be filled with that Divine Life, that we had loſt. Again, *If any Man thirſt, let him come unto me and drink.——And out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers of living Water.* What can the *Latin* or *Greek* Critic do here? Nothing at all. He will only try to make ſome Excuſe for the Strangeneſs of the Phraſe. But when theſe Words are read by one who knows that he, and all Mankind, have loſt the Divine Nature, he taſtes and feels the glad Tidings which they bring; and is in Love with theſe ſweet Sounds, which promiſe ſuch an overflowing Return of Heaven into his Soul. Again, *I beſeech you*, ſays the Apoſtle, *as Strangers and Pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war againſt the Soul*, &c. The *Critic* looks into his Books to ſee how *Latin* and *Greek* Authors have uſed the Words *Stranger* and *Pilgrim*, and ſo ſome Senſe or other is given to the Apoſtle; but the Chriſtian, who knows, that Man, wandering out of Paradiſe, a Colony of Heaven,

was taken Captive by the *Stars* and *Elements*, to live in Labour and Toil, in Sickneſs and Pain, in Hunger and Thirſt, in Heat and Cold amongſt the Beaſts of the Field; where evil Spirits, like roaring Lions, ſeek to devour him; he only knows in what Truth and Reality Man is a poor Stranger and diſtreſſed Pilgrim upon Earth. Again, *To the Poor*, ſaith *Chriſt*, *the Goſpel is preached.* The Critic only conſiders the ſeveral kinds of worldly Poverty. But the Chriſtian, who knows that the real great Poverty of Man conſiſts in his having loſt the Riches and Greatneſs of his firſt Life, knows, that to this poor Man the Goſpel is preached, becauſe he only, who is ſenſible of this Poverty, can hear and receive it. For to Man, inſenſible of his fallen State, the glad Tidings of the Goſpel are but like News from *Fairy Land*; and the Croſs of *Chriſt* can only be a Stumbling-block and Fooliſhneſs to him, whether he be a Chriſtian, a *Jew*, or a *Greek*. Thus does it appear, that all the Doctrines and Sayings of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles are full of a comfortable, divine, and exalted Senſe, or mere empty Words, juſt as the Fall of Man from a Divine Life is either owned or diſowned. But I have done.

Theophilus.

Theophilus. Thus far then, *Humanus*, we are agreed, that the Fall of Man into the Life and State of this World, is the whole Ground of his Redemption; and that a real Birth of *Chriſt* in the Soul, is the whole Nature of it. Let me now only aſk you, How you would endeavour to convince a Man of his fallen State?

Humanus. I would not begin with the Account that *Moſes* gives of it, for ſeveral Reaſons; but chiefly for theſe Two: *Firſt*, Becauſe the *Fall* is not an *hiſtorical* Matter; nor would a mere hiſtorical Knowlege of it be of any Uſe, or do any real Good to him. *Secondly*, Becauſe *Moſes*'s Account is not the Proof of the Fall, and therefore not to be appealed to as ſuch.

Moſes is the firſt Hiſtorian of *natural Death*, and has recorded the Death of the Firſt Man, and of many others who were born of him: But the *Proof* that Man is *mortal* lies not in *Moſes*'s Hiſtory of the Death of the Firſt Man, but in the known Nature of Man, and the World from which he has his Life. Again, we do not want *Moſes* to aſſure us, that there was a Firſt Man; that he had ſomething from *Heaven*, and ſomething from the *Earth* in him; and muſt have come into the World in another Man-

ner than all thoſe who have deſcended from him. For every Man is himſelf the infallible Proof of this; *Moſes* is only the Hiſtorian that has recorded the *When*, and *Where*, and *How* this Firſt Man came into the World, and what was his Name. But the *Proof* and *Certainty* of the Fact, that ſuch a Firſt Man there muſt have been, lies not in *Moſes*'s Account, but ſtands proved to every Man from his own Nature and State in this World.

Thus it is with the *Fall*; we have no more Occaſion to go to *Moſes*, to prove that Man and the World are in a fallen State, than to prove that Man is a poor, miſerable, weak, vain, diſtreſſed, corrupt, depraved, ſelfiſh, ſelf-tormenting, periſhing Creature, and that the World is a ſad Mixture of falſe Goods, and real Evils; a mere Scene of all Sorts of Trials, Vexations, and Miſeries; all ariſing from the Frame, and Nature, and Condition both of Man and the World. This is the full infallible Proof of the Fall of Man; which is not a Thing learnt from any Hiſtory, but ſhews itſelf every-where, and every Day, with ſuch Clearneſs as we ſee the Sun. *Moſes* is not the Prover of the Fact, that Man is fallen; but is the Recor-

der

der of the *When* and *How*, and the *Manner* in which the Fall hath happened.

My Firſt Attempt therefore, upon any Man, to convince him of the Fall, as the Ground of the Redemption, ſhould be an Attempt to do that for him, which Affliction, Diſappointments, Sickneſs, Pain, and the Approach of Death, have a natural Tendency to do; *viz.* to convince him of the Vanity, Poverty, and Miſery of his Life and Condition in this World. For as this is the true Proof of the fallen State of Man, ſo Man can only be convinced of it, by having this Proof truly ſet before him. I would therefore appeal at firſt to nothing but his own Nature and Condition in the World; and ſhew him how unreaſonable, nay, impoſſible, it is, that a God, who has nothing in himſelf but infinite Goodneſs and infinite Happineſs, ſhould bring forth a Race of intelligent Creatures, that have neither natural Goodneſs, nor natural Happineſs. The inſpired Saints of God ſay thus, *Man that is born of a Woman hath but a ſhort Time to live, and is full of Miſery.* Again, *Man walketh in a vain Shadow, and diſquieteth himſelf in vain.* Now if what is here truly ſaid of Mankind, could be truly ſaid of any Order of the Beaſts and Animals of the Field,

Field, who could defend the Goodneſs of God in bringing ſuch Creatures into ſuch a State of Life? Now though the Deiſt rejects the Scriptures, conſidered as a Volume of divine Revelation, yet every thing that he outwardly ſees, and inwardly feels, demonſtrates this *capital Truth* of Scripture, that Man is in this poor and miſerable State of Life. And therefore, every thing that we know of God, and every thing that we know of Man, is a daily irreſiſtible Proof, that Man is in a fallen State. Look at the human Infant juſt come out of the Womb, you can hardly bear the Sight; it is a Picture of ſuch Deformity, Nakedneſs, Weakneſs, and helpleſs Diſtreſs, as is not to be ſeen amongſt the home-born Animals of this World: The *Chicken* has its Birth from no Sin, and therefore it comes forth in Beauty; it runs and pecks as ſoon as its Shell is broken: The *Pig* and the *Calf* go both to play, as ſoon as the Dam is delivered of them; they are pleaſed with themſelves, and pleaſe the Eye that beholds their frolic State and beauteous Cloathing; whilſt the new-born Babe of a Woman, that is to have an upright Form, that is to view the Heavens, and worſhip the God that made them, lies for Months in groſs Ignorance, Weakneſs,

neſs, and Impurity; as ſad a Spectacle when he firſt begins to breathe the Life of this World, as when in the Agonies of Death he breathes his laſt.

What is all this, but the ſtrongeſt Proof, that Man is the only Creature that belongs not to this World, but is fallen into it through Sin? And therefore his Birth, in ſuch Diſtreſs, bears all theſe Marks of Shame and Weakneſs. Had he been originally of this World, it is neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that this World had done the higheſt Honour to its higheſt Creature; and that he had begun his Life in greater Perfection than any other Animal, and brought with him a more beauſul Cloathing than the fineſt Lilies of the Field have. But, to go on: When the human Infant is ſet upon his Legs, and begins to act for himſelf, he ſoon becomes a more pitiable Object than when crying in the Cradle. The Strength of his Life is a mere Strength of wild Paſſions; his Reaſon is Craft, and ſelfiſh Subtlety; he loves and hates only as Fleſh and Blood prompt him, Jails and Gibbets cannot keep him from Theft and Murder. If he is rich, he is tormented with Pride and Ambition; if poor, with Murmuring and Diſcontent: Be he which he will, ſooner or later, diſordered Paſſions,

Paſſions, diſappointed Luſts, fruitleſs Labour, Pains and Sickneſs will tear him from this World in ſuch *Travail* as his Mother felt, when ſhe brought forth the ſinful Animal.

Now all this Evil and Miſery are purely the natural and neceſſary Effect of his Birth in the beſtial Fleſh and Blood of this World, and there is nothing in his *natural* State that can put a Stop to it; he muſt be evil and miſerable *ſo long* as he has *only* the Life of this World in him. Therefore the abſolute Certainty of the Fall, and the abſolute Neceſſity of a New Birth, are Truths, independently of Scripture, plain to a Demonſtration. Thus, God is in himſelf infinite Goodneſs, and infinite Happineſs; but Man, in his preſent earthly Birth and Life, can neither have Goodneſs or Happineſs, therefore his preſent State of Life could not be brought forth by a God who is all Goodneſs and Happineſs. Thus every Man, that believes in a Creator infinitely perfect, is under a Neceſſity of believing the whole Ground of Chriſtian Redemption, namely, that Man hath ſome way or other loſt that Perfection of Life which he had at firſt from his Creator.

But

But the Christian has yet an additional Proof of this Matter, because the Scriptures, which with him are infallible, so frequently and openly bear Witness to it.

Thus, *Let us make Man in our Image, according to our own Likeness.* How great, how divine, is this Beginning of Man? How can there be any Evil or Misery, any Vanity or Weakness, in a Creature so brought forth? But now what is become of this Man? For if you look at Man just coming out of the Womb, the pitiable Object above described, what can be so absurd, as to call this Birth, his Creation in the Likeness and after the Image of God? Now what is said of the first Man, is not spoken of one Person, but of the human Nature; for the first Man was only the first Instance of that which Mankind were to be. He had no Perfection peculiar to himself, but that of being the first Man; and had he stood, all that came from him, had come to Life as he did, in the same Strength and Glory of Perfection, and not been born of a bestial Womb, like the wild Ass's Colt. Again, set the following Text against *Moses*'s Perfection of the first Image of God, *Man that is born of a Woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of Misery.*

Is not this a full Proof, that the first created Life of Man is quite dead, and that an earthly Life of Misery is risen up instead of it? Again, the Apostle saith, *The natural Man knoweth not the Things of God; they are Foolishness unto him.* Can this natural Man, the Man of earthly Flesh and Blood, that can have no Acquaintance with, or Knowlege of God, to whom the *Things of God are Foolishness*; can this be the Man first created in the Image and Likeness of God? What can be more absurd than such a Thought? Or what Excuse can be made for that Learning which cannot see from so plain a Scripture, that human Nature, *now*, is not that human Nature, which it was at first created, but is dead to that first Life, which it had in the Image and Likeness of God, or the Things of God could not possibly be *Foolishness* to it? But I will end this Matter with these borrowed Words, "We were no more created to "be in the Sorrows, Burdens, and Anguish "of an *earthly Life*, than the Angels were "created to be in the Wrath and Darkness "of Hell. It is as contrary to the Will "and Goodness of God towards us, that "we are out of Paradise, as it is contra-"ry to the Designs and Goodness of God "towards

" towards the Angels, that ſome of them
" are out of Heaven, Priſoners of Darkneſs.

" The Groſſneſs, Impurity, Sickneſs, Pain
" and Corruption of our Bodies, is brought
" upon us by ourſelves, in the ſame manner
" as the hideous, ſerpentine Forms of the De-
" vils are brought upon them. How ab-
" ſurd, and even blaſphemous would it be, to
" ſay with the Scripture and the Church,
" *That we are Children of Wrath, and born*
" *in Sin*, if we had that Nature, which God
" at firſt gave us? What a Reproach upon
" God, to ſay, that this World is a Valley
" of Miſery, a Shadow of Death, full of
" Diſorders, Snares, Evils, and Temptations,
" if this was an original Creation, or that
" State of Things for which God created us?
" Is it not as conſiſtent with the Goodneſs
" and Perfection of God, to ſpeak of the Mi-
" ſery and Diſorder that unfallen holy Angels
" find above, and of the Vanity, Emptineſs, and
" Sorrow of their heavenly State, as to ſpeak
" of the Miſery of Men, and the Sorrows of
" this World, if Men and the World were
" in that Order, in which God at firſt had
" placed them? If God could make any
" Place poor and vain, and create any Be-
" ings into a State of Vanity and Vexation of

" Spirit, he might do so in all Places, and to " all Beings*."

Theophilus. You have put the Fall, *Humanus*, upon its right Proof, and shewn great Judgment in your intended Method of converting any one to the Belief of it. You have set the whole Matter in so just a Light, that I have nothing that I would add to it.

Humanus. Give me leave, Gentlemen, just to put in a Word or two concerning another plain Indication, that Man has lost that Life and Nature, in which he was first created. *Reason* has been my God, and is the vain Idol of modern Deism, and modern Christianity; and yet human *Reason* has no higher a Birth, than human *Ignorance*, *Infirmity*, and *Mortality*; they all began together; they are inseparable; they generate and are generated from one another; they are the Life of each other; and they must live and die together, and all bear the same Witness to the fallen State of Man. For no Creature can come from the Hands of God into a State of any Ignorance of any thing, that is fit and proper to be known by it. This is as impossible as for God to have an envious, or evil Will. Now all right and natural Knowlege, in whatever Creature it is, is *sensible*, *intuitive*, and *its own Evidence*.

But

* Serious Answer to Dr. *Trapp*, on the Sin, &c. of being Righteous overmuch, p. 35.

But *Opinion*, *Reaſoning*, or *Doubting* (for they are all but one Thing) can only *then* begin, when the Creature has loſt its firſt right and natural State, and is got *ſomewhere*, and become *ſomewhat*, that it cannot tell what to make of. Then begins Doubting, from thence *Reaſoning*, from thence *Debating*; and this is the high Birth of our magnified Reaſon, as nobly born, as *Groping* is, which has its Beginning in and from Darkneſs, or the Loſs of Light. Hence we have a full Proof, that Man has loſt his firſt natural State in which God created him. For Reaſoning, Doubt, and Perplexity in any Creature, is the Effect of ſome Fall, or Departure from its firſt State of Nature, and ſhews, that it wants, and is ſeeking, ſomething that its Nature would have, but knows not how to come at it. The *Beaſts* ſeek not after Truth; a plain Proof, that it has no Relation to them; *has* no Suitableneſs to their Nature, nor ever belonged to them. Man is in Queſt of it, in Perplexity about it, cannot come at it; takes Lyes to be Truth, and Truth to be Lyes; a plain Proof, both that he has it not, and yet *has* had it, was created in it, and for it; for nothing can ſeek for any thing, but that which is loſt, and is wanted; nor could it

form the leaſt Idea of it, but becauſe it has belonged to it, and ought to be his.

The Beaſts have no Ignorance of any thing, that concerns them; but have all the ſenſible, intuitive Knowlege of every thing that is the Good of their Nature. But Man left to his Reaſon is all over Ignorance, Doubt, Conjecture, and Perplexity in Matters of the higheſt Moment, about what he himſelf is, what is his chief Good, where he is to ſeek it, and how to obtain it. For to aſk your Reaſon, how God is your God, how you are in him, and from him, what he is in himſelf, and what he is in you, is but like aſking your Hands to feel out the *Thickneſs*, or the *Thinneſs*, of the Light. To aſk your Reaſon, whether the Soul of Man is immortal in its Nature, is to as good Purpoſe, is going no farther out of the Way, than if you was to aſk your *Eyes* to ſhew you, where *Extenſion* begins, and where it ends. To aſk your Reaſon, whether Man has any thing of God, or the Divine Nature in him, is juſt as ſuitable to the Nature and Power of your Reaſon, as if you was to ask your *Noſe*, whether this or that ſweet, aromatic Smell in the Garden, has any *heavenly Power* mixed with, and opening itſelf in it.

Reaſon,

Reaſon, therefore, is ſo far from being able to help Man to that Knowlege, which his Nature and Condition wants, that it can only help his Ignorance to increaſe and fructify in Doubts, Fictions, and abſurd Debates. And the Thing cannot be otherwiſe; *Man* muſt *walk in a vain Shadow*, ſo long as Reaſon is his Oracle. For nothing can act ſuitably to Nature, find its true State in Nature, or anſwer the End of its Creation by the *Power* of Reaſon; becauſe Reaſon is not the *Life*, the *Power*, or Former of Nature; and therefore has no more Power over Nature, than over the Powers and Principles of Vegetation, either in the Body of Man, or any other Creature. He therefore who turns to his Reaſon, as the true Power and Light of his Nature, betrays the ſame Ignorance of the whole Nature, Power, and Office of Reaſon, as if he was to try to ſmell with his Eyes, or ſee with his Noſe. For as each of theſe Senſes has only its *one Work* or Power, which it cannot alter, or exceed; ſo Reaſon has only its *one Work* or Power, which it cannot alter, or exceed; and that one Work is, to be a bare Obſerver and Comparer of Things that manifeſt themſelves to it by the Senſes. This is as much its one only Power, as Seeing is the one only Power of

the Eyes. When therefore Reason takes upon it to determine on Things not manifested to it by the Senses, as to judge about divine new Birth, a divine Light, and divine Faith; or how the Soul wants, or does not want God, *&c.* it is then as much out of its Place and Office, as the Eye that takes upon it to smell; and its true Name and Nature is, *Whim*, *Humour*, *Caprice*, *Conjecture*, *Opinion*, *Fancy*, and every other Species of Blindness, and Passion.

Now suppose Man to come thus into the World, with this chief Difference from other Creatures; that he is at a Loss to find out what he is, how he is to live, and what he is to seek, as his chief Happiness; what he is to own of a God, of Providence, Religion, *&c.* suppose him to have Faculties that put him upon this Search, and no Faculties, that can satisfy his Inquiry; and what can you suppose more miserable to himself, or more unworthy of a good Creator? Therefore, if you will not suppose a God, that has been good to all Creatures, and given every Animal its proper Light of Nature, except Man, you must be forced to own, that Man has certainly lost the true Light and Perfection of his Nature, which God at first gave him.

But

But I believe *Academicus* wants to say something, and therefore I have done.

Academicus. I was only going to say, that every Attribute of God, every thing that Sense and Reason force us to see, and know, and feel, both of ourselves, and the World, join with the Letter and Spirit of all Scripture in attesting, that Man has certainly had a Divine Life, to which he has certainly died. But yet I must own it is very difficult to conceive, how a Creature brought forth in so high Perfection, in such Enjoyment of the Life, Light, and Spirit of God, could either deceive himself, or be deceived by another.

Theophilus. All that we want to know, my Friend, is the Certainty of the Fact, and this is of the greatest Moment to us: For this is it, that takes us from the Herd of earthly Animals, and lays the Foundation of Religion, and divine Virtue. For had not a Divine Life at *first* been in us, we should be *now* at the same Distance from all true Virtue and Goodness, and as incapable of forming the least Thought or Desire of it, as other Animals; and should have nothing to do, but to look to ourselves, live to our earthly Nature, and make the most of this World. For this is the only Wisdom and Goodness, that an earthly Nature is capable of, whether it be a Man, or a Fox.

The Certainty therefore of the Fact, of our first divine Birth, is all; nothing more need be inquired after. For on this Ground stands all our Comfort; hence it is, that, in Faith and Hope, we can look up to God as our Father, to Heaven as our native Country, and have the Honour to be accounted only as Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth.

But however, to remove your Difficulty, I shall give you a little Sketch of the Possibility of Man's Falling, although created in the Perfection above-mentioned.

Now supposing God to have brought a new intelligent Creature into a new World, all the Attributes of God oblige us to suppose this Creature to be created in a perfect State both inwardly and outwardly. As intelligent, it must partake of the divine Understanding; as living, it must have a Degree of the divine Life in it; as good, it must have a Birth of the divine Goodness in it; as an Offspring of divine Love, it must have a divine Happiness, for the Enjoyment of which the Love of God created it. Now there is but *one possible* Way, for this intelligent Creature, thus endowed, to fall from, or lose the Happiness of its first created State. It cannot knowingly choose Misery, or the Loss of its Happiness: Therefore it can only fall by *such* an Ignorance, or *Power* of falling,

as is consistent with its perfect State. Now this Power lay wholly in the *Newness* of its Life: It only *began* to find itself an intelligent Being; and yet had a Power of Looking with the Eyes of its Understanding either inwards, or outwards; upwards, or downwards. It had a Power of acquiescing and rejoicing in *that*, which it found itself to be, and adoring that Power and Goodness which had brought it into the Possession of such a Nature: And it had a Power of *wandering* into Conjectures, and Reasons about *that*, which it *was not*. Now as a free, intelligent Creature, it could not be without this Power of thus turning its intelligent Eye; and yet, as a beginning Creature, that had no *Experience*, this Power could not be free from a *Possibility* of wandering; and therefore its Power of wandering was not a Defect, but a necessary Part of its first perfect State. Now in this *Possibility* of wandering with its intelligent Eye, looking where it ought not, and entering into Conjectures about *that*, which *it was not*, may be clearly seen the Possibility of its falling from a State of high Perfection.

This is the one only possible Way for a good, intelligent, *new* Creature to lose its Happiness. And I think it may justly be affirmed, that the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall of Man is exactly this very Case; namely,

how the Eye of his *new unexperienced* Understanding, beginning to caſt a wandering Look into *that*, which he *was not*, was by an unſuſpected *Subtlety*, or Serpent, drawn into a *Reaſoning* and Conjecturing about a certain *Good* and *Evil*, which were no Part of his own created State.

Which Inquiry, being given into, ended in the real Knowlege of this *Good* and *Evil*, the Senſibility of which became an immediate Death to his firſt Divine Life, deſtroyed the angelic Image in the Likeneſs of God, and ſet a groſs, earthly, naked, aſhamed, frighted, wretched Animal of beſtial Fleſh and Blood in its Place, the only Animal to which this new Knowlege of Good and Evil could belong.

Suppoſing therefore the Fall of Man, which is a Fact atteſted, and proved by every Thing we know of God, Ourſelves, and the World; the *Moſaic* Account of it has every Mark of Truth, Sobriety, and Juſtneſs, as being a plain and eaſy Deſcription of the one only Way, by which a Creature ſo endowed could change or loſe its firſt happy State.

Academicus. Truly, *Theophilus*, you have given a moſt natural and full Solution of my Difficulty, by which, I ſuppoſe, you mean as well to explain the Fall of Angels, as of Men. But, Sir, if that Pride, to which their

Fall

Fall is charged, muſt have ſtolen upon them, in that ſame *unſuſpected Way*, in which the Longing after the Tree of Good and Evil inſinuated itſelf into Man; *viz.* from a wandering Look into *that*, which they were not, occaſioned by the *Newneſs* of their untried Life, in which they had but juſt began to be; ſuffer me then, to ask, Why the fallen Angels were not, at firſt, the immediate Objects of divine Mercy and Goodneſs? Why they are to be for ever Priſoners of a never-ending Hell? Or, are you of Opinion, that Angels, as well as Men, will be at laſt brought back to their firſt State?

Theophilus. Your Queſtions, *Academicus*, ſeem to have too much of Curioſity in them: But, as I hope you will not give way to this Temper, ſo I will, for once, comply with your Demands.

The *Fall* of Angels muſt be ſuppoſed to have been as ſoon after their Creation, as that of *Adam*. Had they ſtood any time in their new-created State, they had been in one and the ſame Impoſſibility of Falling, as the Angels that are now in Heaven. For no pure, intelligent, good, and holy created Being, can poſſibly loſe this divine State of Perfection, but through the firſt Uſe of its untried State and Powers. The Manner of *Adam*'s falling into the Life of this World plainly ſhews

the

the Manner how the Angels fell into Hell, namely, at first only by looking and conjecturing with their intelligent Eye into *that*, which they were not, which was not opened in them, but was hid in God. This Looking went on till it became a Lust and strong Longing after that *somewhat*; just as it had done in *Adam*, who so gazed upon the earthly Good and Evil, till it opened itself in him. *Adam* looked only at that which was *Creaturely*, and in a *Life below* him; and therefore only that *lower*, *creaturely*, *bestial* Life was brought forth in him. But the Angel turning his wandering Look into that *Height* and Depth which was *not Creaturely*, but hid in God; namely, into the *Might* and *Strength* of Eternity, that he might know *how* the creaturely Life was *kindled* by it; and thinking himself by his exalted Nature, to be as near to this *great Power*, and as capable of *entering* into it, as *Adam* thought himself near to, and capable of knowing the Good and Evil of the earthly Life; and as *Adam* thought to be like God in this new Knowlege; so the Angel imagined to be like God, could he enter into *this Knowlege*, how the *Might* of God kindled the creaturely Life, for then he himself should have the Power of creating or kindling the creaturely Life; and as *Adam*'s Imagination brought forth a

Lust

Luſt and Longing, which could not be ſtopped, till the earthly Knowlege, and earthly Life, had opened itſelf in him; ſo the Angel's Imagination begot ſuch a *Luſt* and *Longing* to know the *Ground* and *Original* of Life, as would not be ſtopt till the *Ground* and *Original* of Life, namely, that *Depth of Darkneſs and Fire*, in and from which every creaturely Life muſt begin, was totally opened in him, and he as much ſwallowed up by Hell, as *Adam* was by the earthly Life. Thus you may ſee, how the ſame aſpiring Imagination (but with regard to different Matters) riſing in the ſame Manner, and from the ſame Cauſe, in both theſe Creatures, and working itſelf up into a *Luſt* and *Longing*, brought the one from Heaven into Hell, and the other from Paradiſe into a beſtial World.

Now as the Luſt of *Adam*, when it had obtained its Deſire, opened all the Properties and Tempers of the beſtial Life in him; ſo the Luſt of the Angel, when it got what it wanted; *viz.* the *Ground* and Original of the creaturely Life, which is *Darkneſs* and *Fire*; immediately opened all the dreadful Properties of Darkneſs and Fire in him, which at once ſwallowed up or extinguiſhed the angelic Nature. Hence Wrath, Hatred, Pride, Envy, Malice, and every Enmity to Light and Love, are the *one only* Life of the fallen Angel; and

he

he can will and act nothing else, but as these Properties of Darkness and Fire drive him.

To ask therefore, Why the fallen Angels continue in their State, is to ask, why *Darkness* is not made to be *Light?* For the *Root* and *Ground* of Nature is *unchangeable*; it keeps its *own Nature*, or it could not be the *Ground*; it must stand always in its *own Place*, and be only the Ground and Root; it cannot rise higher than the Root, no more than the Root of the Tree can be its Branches and Fruit. The Angels, therefore, being fallen into the Ground and Root of Nature, have only the working Life of the Ground and Root of Nature in them; and therefore seem to be as unchangeable, and incapable of having any other, as the Root itself is.

To ask therefore, why the fallen Angels were not helped by the Mercy and Goodness of God, as fallen Man was; is like asking, why the refreshing Dew of Heaven does not do that to *Flint*, which it does to the vegetable Plant? For as the Nature of the Flint is too hard, and too much compacted, to receive any Alteration from the sweet Softness of refreshing Water; so the fallen Angel, like the Flint, being shut up in the wrathful Working of its own hard Darkness and Fire, the Goodness of God can have no Entrance into it.

For

For what are we to understand by the *Mercy* and *Goodness* of God? His Mercy is his Patience. And his Goodness, is his *Light*, and *Word*, and *Holy Spirit*. Now every Creature has the Benefit of divine Patience; but no Creature can have his *Goodness*, but that which is capable of receiving his *Light*, and Holy Spirit.

And his Light, and Holy Spirit, cannot enter into a Creature, as an external, additional Thing, that may be given to it, whether it will, or not, but must be brought forth as a Birth in it. For the Light, and Spirit of God can be no-where, but as a *Birth*, whether it be in God, or the Creature. And therefore the Goodness of God can be imparted to no Creature, but that which is capable of a *Birth* of the Light and Spirit of God, or, in the Words of Scripture, unless it be *born of the Word and Spirit of God*.

This therefore you may rest upon, as a certain Truth, that the *one only* Reason, why the fallen Angels have as *yet* had nothing of the Spirit or Light of God breathed into, or born in them, is, because they are as *yet* utterly incapable of such a Birth, or of being helped by the divine Goodness. For as Flame cannot communicate itself to Flint, nor the Spirit of God to a Beast; because the Flint

Flint ſtands in the utmoſt Contrariety to Flame, and the Beaſt in a total Incapacity of Holineſs; ſo the fallen Angel is in its working Life altogether incapable of receiving the Spirit and Life of God into it. Were it not thus, Angels had been helped, as early as Man: For the Goodneſs, or the Light and Spirit of God loſes no Time, but ſtands always in the ſame Fulneſs of Communication of itſelf to every Creature that is capable of receiving it.

And therefore it is, that fallen Man was immediately helped, becauſe he fell only into earthly Fleſh and Blood, in which the *Light* of this World is kindled, which Light has ſomething of Heaven in it, and was kindled by the Light of Heaven.

And therefore the Goodneſs of God, or his Light, and holy Spirit, could come to Man's Aſſiſtance in the *Light of his Life*, and therein begin a Covenant of Redemption with him. For in this Light of his Life, which is a Ray of Heaven, the *inſpoken Word* in Paradiſe could enter, and have Communion with it, and make itſelf to be a Beginning of Salvation to all thoſe, who by Faith and Hope would lay hold of it, and endeavour after a new Birth from it. Thus ſtands the Ground

and

and Reason why Men, and not Angels, were immediately helped at their Fall.

As to your last Question, whether I believe the final Restoration of all the fallen Angels; I shall only say, that neither antient nor modern Writers, on either Side of the Question, have touched the true Merits of the Cause, or spoke to that Point, on which the Decision of the Matter wholly rests.

For it can neither be sufficiently affirmed, nor sufficiently denied, by any Arguments drawn either from the divine Attributes, or Texts of Scripture; for they cannot come up to the Point in Question. But the true Ground and Merit of the Cause lies solely in the *Possibility* of the Thing, which no one has attempted to prove, nor perhaps is any one able to do it; namely, to shew from a true Ground, that the diabolical Nature is possible to be altered. Darkness can by no Omnipotence be made to be Light; it can only be suppressed, or overcome by it, or forced to be hid under it, as Heaven hides or overcomes Hell; but still the Darkness has its first Nature, never to be changed.

Now if any one can shew, that the Devils are not *essentially* evil, as Darkness is essentially dark, but have only such an *accidental* Difference from Goodness, as *Ice* has from Water,

Water, or a Flint from tranſparent Glaſs; then their Reſtoration is poſſible, and they will infallibly have all their Evil removed out of them by the Goodneſs of God.

But unleſs it could be ſhewn from a true Ground in Nature, that the fallen Angels muſt have ſomething of the heavenly Life in them, though ſhut up in a thouſand times harder Death, than Fire is in the dark Flint, no Length of Time, or any thing elſe, can produce any Alteration, or Ceſſation of their evil Nature.

For Time cannot alter the Nature or Eſſence of Things; it only ſuffers that to come to paſs which is poſſible, and conſiſtent with the Nature of Things. No Length of Time can make a *Circle* to have, or give forth, the Properties of a *right Line*.

Now if the fallen Angels have nothing heavenly in them, but ſtand in as full a Contrariety to all that is heavenly, as the Circle does to the Properties of the *right Line*; then Goodneſs is as impoſſible to be ever awakened in them, as in a Beaſt. The Beaſt muſt always be what it was at firſt; and for this Reaſon, becauſe nothing but the beſtial Nature is in it: If therefore the fallen Angel is totally helliſh, as the Beaſt is beſtial, it muſt always be what it is.

But

But we have launched far enough in a Deep that does not belong unto us; and which cannot be sufficiently affirmed or denied but from the known Possibility, or the known Impossibility, of the Thing, which does not yet appear. If it is possible, I am heartily glad of it; and am also sure enough, that it will then come to pass in its own Time. For if he could not be thought to be a good Man, who did not do all that he could to make Sinners become holy and happy in Goodness, we may be sure enough that the boundless Goodness of God, will set no Bounds to itself, but remove every Misery from every Creature that is capable of it. But let me now return to *Humanus*, and ask him, That, supposing he could not convince a Man of the Certainty of his fallen State, how he would farther proceed with him.

Humanus. Truly, *Theophilus*, I would proceed no farther at all; and for this good Reason, Because I should then have nothing to proceed upon. Did I certainly know of an infallible Remedy for every Disorder of the Eyes, only to be had by going to *China* for it, I should not attempt to persuade a Man, who believed his Eyes to be sound and good, to

leave all that he had, and go to *China* for this infallible Remedy for bad Eyes.

Now to preſs a Man to deny himſelf, and leave all that he hath in the Enjoyments of Fleſh and Blood, in order to be reconciled to God, who believes himſelf to be in the *ſame good* State, in which God created him, ſeems to be as wild a Project, as to deſire him who is well pleaſed with the Goodneſs of his Sight, to go to the *Indies* to be helped to ſee.

And indeed I very well know, from former Experience, that all Diſcourſes about the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, the Doctrine of the Croſs, the exceeding Love of God in giving ſo great a Saviour, with many more Things of the like Nature, were mere empty Sounds, heard with the greateſt Indifference, and incapable of raiſing the leaſt Seriouſneſs in me, merely becauſe I had not the leaſt Notion or Suſpicion of the Truth and Greatneſs of my fallen State, and therefore was not the Man who had any Fitneſs to be affected with theſe Matters. And thence it was that *Chriſt* ſaid, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you*; as plain as if he ſaid, No one elſe can come to me, nor any one elſe be refreſhed by me.

Here

Here therefore, in my humble Opinion, ſhould all *begin*, who would propagate Chriſtianity, or make true Converts to it, and *here ſtop*, as *Chriſt* did. It is only the weary, and heavy laden, that are fitted to be Converts, or refreſhed; and therefore we can no way help a Man to be a Chriſtian, or fit him to be refreſhed by *Chriſt*, but by bringing him into a full Senſibility of the Evil, and Burden, and Vanity of his natural State. And if he cannot be made ſenſible of this, we are to leave him to himſelf in his natural State, till ſome good Providence awakens him out of it; and not make Propoſals to him of the Reaſonableneſs of believing the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Neceſſity of his Sufferings and Death, *&c.* for this Method is full as abſurd, as to enter into ſolemn Debate with a confeſſed Atheiſt, about the Reaſonableneſs of worſhiping God in Spirit and Truth; for, as the Exiſtence of a God is the only Ground of proving that he ought to be worſhiped in Spirit and in Truth, ſo the Certainty and Belief of our fallen State is the only Ground of ſhewing the Reaſonableneſs of the Myſteries of Redemption. And he that diſowns the Fall of Man from a Divine Life, has all the ſame Reaſons for rejecting the Myſteries

of our Salvation, as the Atheiſt has to reject the Doctrines of a ſpiritual Worſhip of God. Therefore, to expoſe the Myſteries of our Salvation to the Wrangle of a Debate with an Unbeliever of the Fall of Man, which Myſteries have no other Ground to ſtand upon, is not only helping him to an eaſy Triumph over you, but is the moſt likely Method to prevent his ever being a Chriſtian. For ſeeing how eaſily he can ridicule Myſteries, which, to him in his preſent State, can have no Reaſonableneſs in them, he is put into the moſt likely Way of living and dying in a hardened Contempt of them. Whereas if you ſtick cloſe to the One true Ground of Chriſtianity, and only proceed as that proceeds, and make the Unbeliever no Offers of any other Chriſtianity, but that which is to begin with the acknowleged Senſibility of the Fall of human Nature from its firſt Divine Life; you ſtop where you ought to ſtop, and rob him of all Power and Pretence of meddling with the other Myſteries of Salvation.

The One Buſineſs then upon his Hands, if he will hold out againſt you, muſt be to deny his Reaſon and Senſes, and maintain, in ſpite of both, that Man is not fallen, but is by Nature holy, juſt, good, and happy

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both in Body and Soul; and that Mankind, and the World they are in, have all that Goodneſs and Happineſs, which they could be ſuppoſed to have from an infinitely good and happy God; and who can will nothing in the Creature but Goodneſs and Happineſs. Here you bring the Deiſt to his proper Work, and all the Contradiction to Senſe and Reaſon will lie on his Side: You ſet Chriſtianity upon its true Ground; and whoever thus defends it, as it ought to be defended, not only does Juſtice to the Chriſtian Cauſe, but acts the moſt kind and friendly Part towards thoſe who oppoſe it merely through a Miſunderſtanding of its *true Ground and Nature*; which I will venture to ſay is the Caſe of all the ſober well-meaning Deiſts. For *Deiſm* has no natural Foundation, or Ground of its own, to ſtand upon; it does not grow from any Root or Strength within itſelf, but is what it is merely from the *bad State* of Chriſtendom, and the *miſerable Uſe* that heatheniſh Learning, and worldly Policy, have made of the Goſpel. If it (Deiſm) ſeems to itſelf to be *ſtrong and well-grounded*, it is merely becauſe it can ſo eaſily object to Church-doctrines, and ſcholaſtic Opinions: If it ſeems to itſelf to be *good*, it is becauſe it can ſo eaſily lay open

the Evils which Chriſtians and Churches bring upon one another: If it ſeems to itſelf to be *highly rational*; its Reaſon is, becauſe it is free from that Number of Abſurdities and Contradictions which Chriſtian Churches lay to the Charge of one another. Laſtly, if it keeps off all fearful Forebodings of the Conſequences of not receiving the Goſpel, it is becauſe it ſo plainly ſees, that Chriſtians ſay, *Hail, Maſter*, kiſs the Goſpel, and then break every Part of it.

This is the true Height, and Depth, and total Strength of Deiſm or Infidelity, it never had any other Support in myſelf but this; nor did I ever converſe with a Deiſt, who carried the Matter higher or farther than this, to ſupport the Cauſe. Hence it is, that you made ſo ſpeedy a Convert of me, by ſhewing me ſuch a Chriſtianity as I never heard of before; and ſtript of every Thing that gave me Power to oppoſe it. Had you proceeded in the Way practiſed by moſt Defenders of the Goſpel, you had left me juſt as you found me, if not more confirmed in my old Way. But as you have juſtly removed all Controverſy about Doctrines from the Merits of the Cauſe, and ſhewn that it all lies in this one ſhort, plain, and deciſive Point, namely the Fall of Man; a Fall

proved and demonſtrated to all my Senſes and Reaſon, by every Height and Depth of Nature, by every kind of Miſery, Evil, and Sin in the World, by every thing we know of God, Ourſelves, and the World we live in; the Ground and Foundation of Chriſtianity is undeniable, and no one can be too ſpeedy a Convert to the Belief of it. And as you have alſo ſhewn, that the whole Nature of the Goſpel Redemption means nothing but the one, true, and only poſſible Way of delivering Man from his miſerable State in this World; Chriſtianity is ſhewn to be the moſt intelligible and deſireable Thing that the Heart of Man can think of. And thus, contrary to all Expectation, the Tables are quite turned; *Deiſm* can no longer *be founded on Argument*, and Chriſtianity is as ſelf-evident as our Senſes: All Learning on both Sides, either for or againſt it, is inſignificant; Chriſtianity ſtands upon a Bottom quite ſuperior to it, and may be the ſure Poſſeſſion of every *plain Man*, who has Senſe enough to know whether he is happy or unhappy, good or evil. For this natural Knowlege, if adhered to, is every Man's *ſure* Guide to that *one Salvation* preached by the Goſpel. Which Goſpel ſtands in no more need of Learning and critical Art *now*, than

it did when *Christ* was preaching it upon Earth. How absurd would it have been for any Critics in *Greek* and *Hebrew*, to have followed *Christ* and his Apostles, as necessary Explainers of their hard Words, which called for nothing in the Hearers but penitent Hearts turned to God; and declared, that they only who *were of God, could hear the Word of God!* How strange, that *Christ* should chuse only illiterate Men to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, if only great Scholars could rightly understand what they said! Again, supposing learned Men to have only the true Fitness to understand the Word of Scripture, and that the plain Man is to receive it from them, How must he know which are the Scholars that have the right Knowledge? From whence is he to have this Information? For no one need be told, that ever since Learning has borne Rule in the Church, learned Doctors have contradicted and condemned one another in every essential Point of the Christian Doctrine. Thousands of learned Men tell the Illiterate, they are lost in this or that Church; and Thousands of learned Men tell them, they are lost, if they leave it.

If therefore Christianity is in the Hands of Scholars, how must the plain Man come

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at it? Must he, though unable to understand Scripture, for want of Learning, tell which learned Man is in the right, and which is not? If so, the unlearned Man has much the greatest Ability, since he is to do that for Scholars, which they cannot do for themselves.

But the Truth of the Matter is this; Christian Redemption is God's Mercy to all Mankind; but it could not be so, if every fallen Man, *as such*, had not some Fitness and Capacity to lay hold of it. It must have no Dependance upon Times and Places, or the Ages and several Conditions of the World, or any outward Circumstance of Life; as the First Man partook of it, so must the last; the learned Linguist, and the Blind, the Deaf and Dumb, have but one and the same common Way of finding Life in it. And he that writes large Commentaries upon the whole Bible, must be saved by *something* full as different from Book-knowlege, as they were, who lived when there was neither Book nor any Alphabet in the World.

For this Salvation, which is God's *Mercy* to the fallen Soul of Man, merely as fallen, must be something that *meets* every Man; and which every Man, as fallen, has *something* that directs him to turn to it. For as

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the Fall of Man is the Reaſon of this Mercy, ſo the Fall muſt be the Guide to it; the Want muſt ſhew the Thing that is wanted: And therefore the Manifeſtation of this one Salvation, or Mercy to Man, muſt have a Nature ſuitable, not to this or that great Reader of Hiſtory, or able Critic in *Hebrew* Roots and *Greek* Phraſes, but ſuitable to the common State and Condition of every Son of *Adam*. It muſt be ſomething as grounded in human Nature, as the Fall itſelf is, which wants no Art to make it known; but to which the common Nature of Man is the only Guide in one Man, as well as another. Now this *ſomething*, which is thus obvious to every Man, and which opens the Way to Chriſtian Redemption in every Soul, is *a Senſe of the Vanity and Miſery of this World; and a Prayer of Faith and Hope to God, to be raiſed to a better State.*

Now in this *Senſibility*, which every Man's own Nature leads him into, lies the Whole of Man's Salvation; here the *Mercy* of God and the *Miſery* of Man are met together; here the *Fall* and the *Redemption* kiſs each other. This is the Chriſtianity which is as old as the *Fall*; which alone ſaved the Firſt Man, and can alone ſave the laſt. This is it, on which hang all the Law and the Pro-

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phets, and which fulfils them both; for they have only this End, to turn Man from the Luſts of this Life, to a Deſire, and Faith, and Hope of a better. Thus does the whole of Chriſtian Redemption, conſidered on the Part of Man, ſtand in this Degree of Nearneſs and Plainneſs to all Mankind; it is as ſimple and plain as the feeling our own Evil and Miſery, and as natural as the Deſire of being ſaved and delivered from it.

This is the Chriſtianity which every Man muſt firſt be made ſenſible of, not from Hearſay, but as a Growth or Degree of Life within himſelf, before he can have any Fitneſs, or the leaſt Pretence to judge or ſpeak a Word about the further Myſteries of the Goſpel. But here I ſtop.

Theophilus. Well, *Humanus*, I have now puſhed the Matter with you, as far as I intended; and you have given me full Proof of the Truth and Solidity of your own Converſion, and your Ability to do good amongſt your old Brethren. You muſt now enter the Liſts with them; not to charge them with Ignorance, Ill-will, or Profaneneſs of Spirit, but only to try, in the Spirit of Love and Meekneſs, to undeceive them, in the Manner you have been undeceived; and to ſhew them, that Chriſtianity is by no means that

Thing,

Thing, which you and they have ſo long diſliked.

Nothing can be more right than your Reſolution not to enter into Debate about the Goſpel Doctrines, or propoſe the Reaſonableneſs of them to any one, till he owns himſelf ſenſibly convinced of the foremention'd Fall of Man; and ſtands in a full Deſire to be ſaved, or delivered from it. And if that Time never comes, you muſt leave him, as in the ſame Incapacity to hear or judge of the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Operation of the Holy Spirit, as *Epicurus* would be. For every Man that cleaves to this World, that is in Love with it, and its earthly Enjoyments, is a Diſciple of *Epicurus*, and ſticks in the ſame Mire of Atheiſm, as he did, whether he be a modern Deiſt, a Popiſh or Proteſtant Chriſtian, an *Arian*, or an orthodox Teacher. For all theſe Diſtinctions are without any Difference, if this World has the Poſſeſſion and Government of his Heart. For the Whole of the Matter lies ſolely in this, whether Heaven, or Earth, hath the Heart and Government of Man. Nothing divides the Worſhipers of the true God from Idolaters but this: Where Earth poſſeſſes and rules the Heart, there all are of

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one and the *same* Religion, and worſhip one and the ſame God, however they may be diſtinguiſhed by Sect or Party.

And where-ever the Heart is weary of the Evil and Vanity of the earthly Life, and looking up to God for an heavenly Nature, there all are one of the true Religion, and Worſhipers of the true God, however diſtant they may be from one another, as to Time or Place. But enough has been ſaid of this Matter.

Let me now only, before we break up, obſerve to you the true Ground and Nature of *Goſpel Chriſtianity*: I call it ſo by way of Diſtinction from that *original univerſal* Chriſtianity, which began with *Adam*; was the Religion of the Patriarchs, of *Moſes* and the Prophets, and of every penitent Man in every Part of the World, that had Faith and Hope towards God, to be delivered from the Evil of this World.

But when the Son of God had taken a Birth in and from the human Nature, had finiſhed all the Wonders that belonged to our Redemption, and was ſat down at the Right Hand of God in Heaven, then a heavenly Kingdom was ſet up on Earth, and the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven, or was given to the Flock of *Chriſt* in ſuch a Degree of

Birth

Birth and Life, as never was, nor could be given to the human Nature, till Christ, the Redeemer of the human Nature, *was glorified*. But when the Humanity of Christ, our Second *Adam*, was *glorified*, and become all heavenly, then the heavenly Life, the Comfort, and Power, and Presence of the holy Spirit, was the Gift which he gave to his Brethren, his Friends and Followers, which he had left upon Earth.

The Holy Ghost descended in the Shape of cloven Tongues of Fire on the Heads of those, that were to begin and open the new Powers of a *Divine Life* set up amongst Men. This was the Beginning and Manifestation of the whole Nature and Power of *Gospel Christianity*, a Thing as different from what was Christianity before, as the Possession of the Thing hoped for is different from Hope, or Deliverance different from the Desire or Expectation of it. Hence the Apostles were new Men, entered into a new Kingdom come down from Heaven, enlightened with new Light, inflamed with new Love, and preached not any absent or distant Thing, but *Jesus Christ*, as the *Wisdom and Power* of God, felt and found within them, and as a Power of God ready to be communicated in the same Manner, as a new

Birth

Birth from above, to all that would repent and believe in him. It was to this Change of Nature, of Life, and Spirit, to this certain, immediate Deliverance from the Power of Sin, to be poſſeſſed and governed by Gifts and Graces of an heavenly Life, that Men were then called to, as true Chriſtianity. And the Preachers of it bore Witneſs, not to a Thing that they had heard, but to a Power of Salvation, a Renewal of Nature, a Birth of Heaven, a Sanctification of Spirit, which they themſelves had received. Goſpel Chriſtianity then ſtood upon its own true Ground; it appeared to be what it was. And what was it? Why, it was an *awakened Divine Life* ſet up amongſt Men; itſelf was its own Proof; it appealed to its proper Judge, to the Heart and Conſcience of Man, which was alone capable of being touched with theſe Offers of a new Life.

Hence it was, that Sinners of all Sorts, that felt the Burden of their evil Natures, were in a State of Fitneſs to receive theſe glad Tidings. Whilſt the rigid Phariſee, the orthodox Prieſt, and the rational Heathen, though at Enmity with one another, and each proud of his own Diſtinction, yet all agreed in rejecting and abhorring a Spiritual Saviour, that was to ſave them from their carnal ſelves, and the Vanity of their own rational Selfiſh Virtues.

Virtues. But when, after a while, Chriſtianity had loſt its firſt Glory, appeared no longer as a *Divine Life awakened* amongſt Men, and itſelf was no longer its own Proof of the Power and Spirit of God manifeſted in it; then heatheniſh Learning, and temporal Power, was from Age to Age forced to be called the Glory and Proſperity of the Church of Chriſt; although in the *Revelation* of *St. John*, its Figure is that of a ſcarlet Whore riding upon the Beaſt.

Here therefore, my Friend, you are to place the true Diſtinction of Goſpel Chriſtianity from all that went before it, or that is come up after it. It is purely and ſolely a *Divine Life awakened*, and *ſet up amongſt Men*, as the *Effect* and Fruit of Chriſt's *Glorification in Heaven*; and has no other Promiſe from him but that of his Holy Spirit, to be with it, as its Light, its Guide, its Strength, its Comfort, and Protection, to the End of the World. Therefore as *Goſpel* Chriſtians, we belong to the *new Covenant of the Holy Spirit*, which is the Kingdom of God come down from Heaven on the Day of *Pentecoſt*; and therefore it is, that there is no Poſſibility of ſeeing or entering into this new Kingdom, but by being born again of the Spirit. The Apoſtles and Diſciples of Chriſt, though they had

had been baptized with Water, had followed Christ, heard his Doctrines, and done Wonders in his Name; yet as then, stood only *near* to the Kingdom of God, and preached it to be *at hand*. They had only seen and known Christ according to the Flesh; had followed him with great Zeal, but with little and very low Knowlege either of him or his Kingdom; and therefore it was, that they were commanded to stand still, and not act as his Ministers in his new glorified State, till they were endued *with Power from on high*: Which Power they then received, when the Holy Ghost with his cloven Tongues of Fire came down upon them, by which they became the illuminated Instruments, that were to diffuse the Light of an heavenly Kingdom over all the World. From that Day began *Gospel Christianity*, with its true Distinction from every thing that was before it; which was the *Ministration of the Spirit*; and the Ministers of it called the World to nothing but Gifts and Graces of the same Spirit, to look for nothing but Spiritual Blessings, to trust, and hope, and pray for nothing but the Power of that Spirit, which was to be the one Life and ruling Spirit of this newly opened Kingdom of God. No one could join himself to them, or have any Part with them,

but by dying to the Wisdom and Light of the Flesh, that he might live by the Spirit, through Faith in *Jesus Christ*, who had thus called him to his Kingdom and Glory. Now this Christianity is its own Proof; it can be proved from nothing but itself; it wants neither Miracles, nor outward Witness; but, like the Sun, is only its own Discoverer.

He that adheres only to the History of the Facts, Doctrines, and Institutions of the Gospel, without being born of its Spirit, is only such a Christian, and is no nearer to Christ, than the Jew, who carnally adhered to the Letter of the Law. They both stand in the same Distance from Gospel Christianity.

It is in vain therefore for the modern Christian, to appeal to Antiquity, to History, and antient Churches, to prove that he belongs to Christ; for he can only belong to him, by having the Power of Christ, and the Spirit of God living and dwelling in his renewed inward Man.

But a learned Christianity, supported and governed by Reason, Dispute, and Criticism, that is forced to appeal to Canons, and Councils, and antient Usages, to defend itself, has lost its Place, stands upon a fictitious Ground, and shews, that it cannot appeal to itself, to its own Works, which alone are

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the certain and only Proofs either of a true, or a falſe Chriſtianity.

For the Truth of Chriſtianity is the Spirit of God living and working in it; and where this Spirit is not the Life of it, there the outward Form is but like the outward Carcaſe of a departed Soul.

For the Spiritual Life is as much its own Proof, as the natural Life, and needs no outward, or foreign Thing to bear Witneſs to it. But if you pleaſe, Gentlemen, we will end for this time, and refer what remains to the Afternoon.

The End of the Firſt DIALOGUE.

THE

SECOND DIALOGUE.

Academicus. I Must take the Liberty, Gentlemen, of speaking first this Afternoon; for though I have been much pleased with what pass'd betwixt *Humanus* and *Theophilus* in the Morning, yet I must own to you all, that I was quite disappointed; for I came in full Expectation of hearing every thing, that I wish, and want to know, concerning *Jacob Behmen*, and his Works. For though I have been reading, for more than two Years, some one or other of his Books, with the utmost Attention, and I every-where find the greatest Truths of the Gospel most fundamentally asserted, yet presently I am led into such Depths, as I know not where I am, and talked to in such new, intricate, and unintelligible Language, as seems quite impossible to be comprehended. Sometimes I almost suspect, that the Author understood not himself: For I think, if I knew any Truths, though ever so deep or uncommon; yet, if I understand them plainly myself, I could set them before others in the same Plainness, that they appeared to me.

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All my Acquaintance have the ſame Complaint that I here make; but ſome hope, and others ſay, that if you live to publiſh any of his Books, you will remove moſt of his ſtrange and unintelligible Words; and give us Notes and Explications of ſuch as you don't alter. Surely a Kind of Commentary upon him, would reconcile many to the reading of him, who, in the State he is in, cannot have Patience to puzzle their Heads about him.

Ruſticus. Oh this impatient Scholar! How many Troubles do I eſcape, through the want of his Learning? How much better does my old Neighbour *John* the Shepherd proceed? In Winter Evenings, when he comes out of the Field, his own Eyes being bad, the old Woman his Wife puts on her Spectacles, and reads about an Hour to him, ſometimes out of the Scriptures, and ſometimes out of *Jacob Behmen*; for he has had two or three of his Books ſome Years. I ſat by one Evening, when my old Dame, reading *Jacob*, had much ado to get on: *John*, ſaid I, do you underſtand all this? Ah, ſays he, God bleſs the Heart of the dear Man, I ſometimes underſtand but little of him; and mayhap *Betty* does not always read right; but that little which I often do underſtand, does me ſo much Good, that I love him where I don't underſtand him.

John, said I, shall I bring a Man to you, that knows the Meaning of all *Jacob*'s hard Words, and can make all his high Matters as plain to you, as the plainest Things in the World? No, no, replied *John*, I don't want such a Man, to make a talking about *Jacob*'s Words; I had rather have but a little of his own, as it comes from him, than twenty times as much at second-hand. Madam, the *Squire's Wife*, of our Town, hearing how *Betty* and I loved the Scriptures, brought us, one Day, a huge *expounding Book* upon the New Testament; and told us, that we should understand the Scripture a deal better, by reading it in that Book, than the Testament alone. — The next Lord's Day, when two or three Neighbours, according to Custom, came to sit with us in the Evening; *Betty*, said I, bring out Madam's great Book, and read the fifth Chapter of *St. Matthew*. When she had done that, I bid her read the fifteenth Chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. The next Morning, said I to *Betty*, carry this *expounding Book* again to my Mistress, and tell her, that the Words of Christ, and his Apostles, are best by themselves, and just as they left them.

And, as I was that Morning going to my Sheep, thought I to myself, This great *expound-*

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ing Book ſeems to have done juſt as much Good to this little Book of the Teſtament, by being added to it, and mixed with it, as a *Gallon* of Water would do to a little Cup of *true Wine*, by being added to it, or mixed with it. The Wine indeed would be all there; but its fine Taſte, and cordial Spirit, which it had, when drank by itſelf, would be all loſt and drowned in the Coldneſs and Deadneſs of the Water.

When my *Betty* uſed to read this, or ſome ſuch Words of Chriſt, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*; ſhe uſed to ſtop a little, that my Heart might have time to be affected with them, to love the bleſſed Thing there ſpoken of, and lift up itſelf to God in Deſire of it. But this great Book takes this good Work from my Heart; and only calls upon my Mind, to behold the *many Parts* which the Text may be ſplit into, and the *many Meanings*, ſome better and ſome worſe, ſome higher and ſome lower, that every Part has, and may be taken in, by ſome Doctor of ſome Church or other. Therefore, *Ruſticus*, I ſent the great Book to Madam again; and am, for the ſame Reaſon, utterly againſt hearing your *Expounder* of *Jacob Behmen*. If *Jacob* has more Truths than other Folks, he is the beſt able to tell

me what they are; and if he has ſome Matters too high for me, I don't deſire any leſſer Man to make them lower.

When he, like an *Elijah*, in his *Fiery Chariot*, is caught up into ſuch Heights, and ſees and relates ſuch Things, as I cannot yet comprehend; I love and reverence him for having been where I never was; and ſeeing ſuch Things as he cannot make me to ſee: Juſt as I love and reverence *St. Paul* for having been caught up into the third Heaven, and hearing and ſeeing Things not poſſible to be uttered in human Words.

As I have but *one End* in hearing the Scriptures read to me, to fill me with the Love of God, and every Kind of Goodneſs; ſo every Part of Scripture, whether plain or myſterious, does me the ſame Good, is alike good to me, and kindles the ſame heavenly Flame in my Soul. Thus theſe plain Words, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart; and ye ſhall find Reſt unto your Souls*; give me, without any Expounder of their Meaning, ſuch an Averſion and Diſlike of all Vanity and Pride, fill me with ſuch ſweet Contentment in every Lowlineſs of Life, that I long to be the Servant of every human Creature. On the other hand, theſe lofty Words of Scripture,——*Behold, a Throne was*

ſet

set in Heaven; and he that sat thereon, was, to look upon, like a Jasper-stone; and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne; and four-and-twenty Seats; and upon the Seats, four-and-twenty Elders in white Raiment, and Crowns of Gold upon their Heads: And out of the Throne proceeded Lightnings, and Thunders, and Voices: And before the Throne were seven Lamps of Fire, which are the seven Spirits of God: And before the Throne there was a Sea of Glass like unto Crystal: And in the midst of the Throne, and round about it, were four Beasts full of Eyes before and behind: And the first Beast was like a Lion, the second like a Calf, the third had a Face as a Man, and the fourth was like a flying Eagle: And the four Beasts had each of them six Wings, and were full of Eyes; and they rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when these Beasts give Glory, and Honour, and Thanks, to him that sat on the Throne, the four-and-twenty Elders fall down before him that sat on the Throne, and cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory and Honour, for thou hast created all Things, &c.*

Now

* *Revelations*, iv. ver. 2, *&c.*

Now these lofty and mysterious Words, instead of puzzling my Head, lay hold of my Heart, which, all inflamed with them, rises up with the Eyes and Wings of the Beasts in their Song of Praise and Honour; and bows down with the Elders that worship the high and mighty Lord of Heaven and Earth. And thus I want no *Hebrew* or *Greek* Scholar to tell me this or that, what are the seven Spirits of God, why four Kinds of Beasts, why neither more nor less than six Wings, who were the Elders, and why twenty-four; but the *whole Matter*, as if a Glance of the Majesty of Heaven had just passed by me, strikes my Heart with such good Transports of Wonder and Joy, as makes me all Longing and Desire to be one of those, who are always singing the Praises and Wonders of the Majesty of God. And thus, *Rusticus*, all that the Scriptures give me to drink, whether high or low, is equally a Cup of Blessing to me, and equally helps forward the Growth of Heaven in my Soul.

Bring not therefore your cunning Man, that has Skill in Words, to me; for Words are but Words; and though they be spoken even by the Messengers of God, as Angels, or Prophets, or Apostles; when they do their best, they can only do, as *John the Baptist* did,

did, *bear Witneſs to the Light*: But the Light itſelf, which can only give Light to the Soul, is God himſelf. And therefore not he that can beſt ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, but he that moſt loves God, that is, that moſt loves *the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature*; he has moſt of God, and the Light of God within him.

Thus ended honeſt old *John* the Shepherd. And now, *Academicus*, if your learned Curioſity could be as much affected with what he has ſaid, as my ignorant Simplicity is, you would drop all that you had ſaid, as the Effect of ſuch Impatience as is much fitter to bring Darkneſs than Light into your Soul. You own, that, in the Works of *Behmen*, the greateſt Points of Chriſtianity are moſt fundamentally opened. And how can you be more ſelf-condemned, than by deſiring more?

But the Truth is, you have only heard theſe fundamental Matters; you have only received them as good *Notions*; are content with the *Hearſay* of them; and are therefore impatient to have more of this hearſay Knowlege, that you may become more learned in high Matters, and more able to talk about the Ground and Depth of Chriſtian Doctrines. You know, as well as I can tell you, that this is your Joy in *Jacob Behmen*; and thence it

is,

is, that you have no Patience, when you can't come at his Meaning, so as to add it to your Number of Notions. And thus you forget how often he tells you, and how fundamentally he proves to you, that this *notional* Knowlege, the Treasure of *human Reason*, is the very Builder of *Babel*. Whilst you are under the Guidance of our own *Babylonian Reason*, you can have no Good either from the Scriptures, or the Writings of *Jacob Behmen*; but will be hunting after *Notes* and *Commentaries* to help you to Notions which only delude your Mind with the empty Shadows of Knowlege. Would you know the Truths of *Jacob Behmen*, you must see that you stand where he stood; you must begin where he began, and seek only, as he tells you he did, the *Heart of God, that he might be saved from the Wrath of Sin and Satan*; and then it was, that the Light of God broke in upon him. But you, full of the Power of your own Reason, want to stand upon the Top of his Ladder, without the Trouble of beginning at the Bottom, and going up Step by Step. But I believe you had rather have *Theophilus* speak than me; and therefore I shall now leave you to him.

Theophilus. Truly, *Academicus*, I am much of the same Mind with honest *Rusti-*

cus,

cus, though perhaps I might not have ſpoken it ſo bluntly as he has done. You ſeem to be in the ſame Error, that moſt of my learned Friends are in, with regard to *Jacob Behmen*, who, though they greatly admire him, yet, of all People, receive the leaſt true Benefit from him. They have been trained up in Diſpute and Controverſy, accuſtomed to determine every thing by the Light of their own Reaſon, and know no other Guide to Truth. And therefore, till, ſooner or later, they come to know the Falſeneſs of this Guide, they can have no Entrance into the Region of Divine Light; but muſt be forced to take their Part, not of Truth, but of ſome ſuch Syſtem of Opinions, as their Birth and Education has placed *them* in. Thus, a learned *Papiſt* has one Creed, and the learned *Proteſtant* has another; not becauſe Truth and Light has helped him to it; but becauſe Birth and Education have given to the one Popiſh, to the other Proteſtant Eyes. For *Reaſon*, which is the *Eye* or Light of both, finds as much to its Purpoſe, and as many good Tools to work with, in Popiſh, as in Proteſtant Opinions. *Learning* and *Criticiſm* are an open Field to both, and he only has the greateſt Harveſt, who is beſt ſkilled in Reaping.

Academicus.

Academicus. I perceive then, that I must renounce all my Learning and Reason, if I am to understand *Jacob Behmen.* I cannot say, that I am resolved to purchase it at so great a Price. I hope the Knowlege to be had from the Scriptures, will be sufficient for me, without his deep Matters. I did not expect to find you so great an Enemy to Learning.

Theophilus. Dear *Academicus*, be not so uneasy; I am no more an Enemy to Learning, than I am to that Art which builds Mills to grind our Corn, and Houses for ourselves to dwell in. I esteem the liberal Arts and Sciences as the noblest of human Things; I desire no Man to dislike or renounce his Skill in antient or modern Languages; his Knowlege of Medals, Pictures, Paintings, History, Geography, or Chronology; I have no more Dislike of these Things in themselves, than of the Art of *throwing* Silk, or making *Lace.* But then all these Things are to stand in their proper Places, and every one kept within its own Sphere.

Now all this Circle of Science and Arts, whether liberal or mechanic, belongs solely to the *natural Man*; they are the Work of his *natural Powers and Faculties*; and the most wicked, sensual, unjust Person, who regards neither God, nor Man, may yet be one of the ablest

Proficients

Proficients in any or all of them. But now Christian Redemption is quite of another Nature; it has no Affinity to any of these Arts or Sciences; it belongs not to the outward natural Man, but is purely for the Sake of an *inward, heavenly* Nature, that was lost, or put to Death, in Paradise, and buried under the Flesh and Blood of the earthly, natural Man. It breathes a Spark of Life into this inward, hidden, or lost Man; by which it feels and finds itself, and rises up in new awakened Desires after its lost Father, and native Country.

This is Christian Redemption; on the one side, it is the *Heavenly Divine Life offering itself again to the inward Man, that had lost it.* On the other side, it is the *Hope, the Faith, and Desire of this inward Man, hungering, and thirsting, stretching after, and calling upon this Divine and Heavenly Life.*

Now, whether this awakened, new Man breathes forth his Faith and Hope towards this *Divine Life*, in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *English* Sounds, or in no one of them, can be of no Significancy: A Man that can do it only in one, or in all these Languages, is neither farther from, nor nearer to, this *redeeming Life of* God. Or can you think, that the *heavenly* Life must more willingly enter into, and

open itſelf in, a Man that has many Languages, than in him, who knows only one? Or, that a Man, who can make *High Dutch*, *Welſh*, or *Greek Grammars*, muſt have a ſtronger Faith, a more lively Hope, and a more continual Thirſt after God, than he who can but poorly ſpell in his Mother Tongue? But now, if this is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed; then, my Friend, without the leaſt Injury done, or the leaſt Enmity ſhewn, to *Learning*, *Science*, *Reaſon*, and *Criticiſm*, you muſt place them juſt where I have done, amongſt the Things and Ornaments of this earthly Life, and ſuch Things as, in their own Nature, are as eaſy to be had, and as highly enjoyed, by Men that deſpiſe all Goodneſs, as by thoſe who fear God, and eſchew Evil.

And therefore, Sir, no Truths concerning the *Divine and Heavenly Life* are to be brought for Tryal before this learned Bar, where both Jury and Judges are born and bred, live and move and have their Being in another World, which have no more Power of feeling the Divine Life, than an *Eagle*'s Eyes can look into the Kingdom of God. If you, my Friend, having read many old *Greek* and *Latin* Books, ſhould intend to publiſh *Homer*, or *Cæſar's Commentaries*, with critical Notes, I ſhould have nothing to ob-

ject

ject to your Ability; you might be as well qualified by such Means for such a Work, as one Man is to make *Baskets*, or another *Traps* to catch Flies. But if, because of this Skill in old *Greek* and *Latin*, you should seem to yourself, or others, to be well qualified to write Notes upon the Spirit and Meaning of the Words of Christ, I should tell you, that your Undertaking was quite unnatural, and as impossible to be free from Error, as when a blind Man undertakes to set forth the Beauty of different Colours.

For the Doctrines of Redemption belong no more to the natural Man, than the Beauty of Colours to him, that never saw the Light. And from this unnatural Procedure it is, that the Scriptures are as useful to the *Socinian* or *Arian*, the *Papist* or the *Protestant*; and they can as easily, by the Light of Reason, charge one another with Absurdities, and confute each other's Opinion, as two blind Men can quarrel, and reject each other's Notions of *Red* and *Green*.

Jesus Christ is the Light of that heavenly Man that died in Paradise; and therefore nothing in Man, but that awakened Seed of Life, that died in Paradise, can have the least Sensibility or Capacity for receiving the redeeming Power of *Jesus Christ*. But *Light*

and *Life* have no Dependence upon Words or Phraſes; they both can only proceed from a *Birth*, whether it be the Light and Life of God, or the Light and Life of this World. How abſurd would it be, to ſuppoſe, that a Man, naturally blind, muſt be taught Grammar or Logic, to fit him for the Reception of the Light of the Sun, and the Knowlege of Colours? Yet not leſs abſurd, than to think, that Skill in *Hebrew* and *Greek* Words can open the Light of God and Heaven in the Soul. If you now, *Academicus*, can ſet this Matter in a juſter Light, I am ready to hear you.

Academicus. Standing upon the Ground, that you, *Theophilus*, ſtand upon, all that you have ſaid of *Reaſon*, *Science*, *hiſtorical Knowlege*, or critical Skill in Words, is unanſwerable. For what can all theſe Things avail, if Redemption is purely a Birth of the Divine Nature, Light, and Spirit of God, offered to fallen Man; which Birth can only be received by the Faith, Hope, and Deſire of *that* inward Man, which is Divine in us? For nothing elſe can have any Hunger or Thirſt after the Divine Nature, but *that* which is itſelf born of it.

Now this true Ground of the Chriſtian Redemption gives the greateſt Glory to God,

and Comfort to Man. It explains the Fact, why plain and simple Souls, having their inward Man kindled into Love, Hope, and Faith in God, are capable of the highest Divine Illumination; whilst learned Students, full of Art and Science, can live and die without the least true Knowlege of God and Christ, and Slaves to all the Lusts of the Flesh. For thus, this Redemption belongs only to one Sort of People, and yet is common to all. It is equally near, and equally open, to every Son of Man. There is no Difference between Learned and Unlearned, between *Jew* or *Greek*, Male or Female, *Scythian* or Barbarian, Bond or Free; but the same Lord is God over all, and equally nigh to all that call upon him. It is told us, as the Glory of the Divine Goodness, that *it giveth Fodder to the Cattle; and feedeth the young Ravens that cry unto it.* What Cattle? Surely not only to the Cattle of *Jacob*; or only to the young Ravens that cry in the Land of *Judah.* Yet this would be much more consistent with the Goodness of the One universal God, than to hold, that only the Sons of *Jacob*, or the Children of the Circumcision, were in the Covenant of God's Redemption.

But now, though this one Ground of Christian Redemption stands in the highest

Degree of Plainneſs from Scripture, and is abſolutely certain from the very Nature of the Thing; yet, till I met with honeſt *Ruſticus*, I never converſed with any Man, or read any Book, that gave me the leaſt Hint of it. When I had taken my *Degrees*, I conſulted ſeveral great Divines, to put me in a Method of ſtudying Divinity. Had I ſaid to them, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* they would have preſcribed *Hellebore* to me, or directed me to the Phyſician as a vapoured Enthuſiaſt. And yet I am now fully ſatisfied, that this one Queſtion ought to be the ſole Inquiry of him, who deſires to be a *true Divine*. And was our Saviour himſelf on Earth, who ſurely could do more for me, than all the Libraries in the World; yet I need have aſked no more Divinity-Knowlege of him, than is contained in this one Queſtion.

It would take up near half a Day, to tell you the Work which my learned Friends have cut out for me. One told me, that *Hebrew* Words are all; that they muſt be read without Points; and then the old Teſtament is an opened Book. He recommended to me a Cart-load of Lexicons, Critics, and Commentators, upon the *Hebrew* Bible. Another tells me, the *Greek* Bible is the beſt;

that

that it corrects the *Hebrew* in many Places; and refers me to a large Number of Books learnedly writ in the Defence of it. Another tells me, that Church-History is the main Matter; that I must begin with the first Fathers, and follow them through every Age of the Church, not forgetting to take the Lives of the *Roman* Emperors along with me, as striking great Light into the State of the Church in their Times. Then I must have recourse to all the Councils held, and the Canons made, in every Age; which would enable me to see with my own Eyes the great Corruptions of the Council of *Trent*. Another, who is not very fond of antient Matters, but wholly bent upon *rational* Christianity, tells me, I need go no higher than the *Reformation*; that *Calvin* and *Cranmer* were very great Men; that *Chillingworth* and *Locke* ought always to lie upon my Table; that I must get an intire Set of those learned Volumes wrote against Popery in King *James*'s Reign; and also be well versed in all the Discourses which Mr. *Boyle*'s and Lady *Moyer*'s Lectures have produced: And then, says he, you will be a Match for our greatest Enemies, which are the Popish Priests, and modern Deists. My Tutor is very Liturgical; he desires me, of all Things, to get all the Collections that I can of the

antient Liturgies, and all the Authors that treat of ſuch Matters; who, he ſays, are very learned, and very numerous. He has been many Years making Obſervations upon them, and is now clear, as to the Time, when certain little Particles got Entrance into the Liturgies, and others were by Degrees dropt. He has a Friend abroad, in Search of antient Manuſcript Liturgies; for, by the bye, ſaid he, at parting, I have ſome Suſpicion that our Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is *eſſentially* defective, for want of having a little Water in the Wine, *&c.* Another learned Friend tells me, the *Clementine Conſtitutions* is the Book of Books; and that all that lies looſe and ſcattered in the New Teſtament, ſtands there in its true Order and Form; and though he won't ſay, that Dr. *Clarke* and Mr. *Whiſton* are in the right; yet it might be uſeful to me to read all the *Arian* and *Socinian* Writers, provided I ſtood upon my Guard, and did it with Caution. The laſt Perſon I conſulted, adviſed me to get all the Hiſtories of the Riſe and Progreſs of Hereſies, and of the Lives and Characters of Heretics. Theſe Hiſtories, he ſaid, contract the Matter; bring Truth and Error cloſe in View; and I ſhould find all that collected in a few Pages, which would have coſt me ſome Years to have got together.

together. He alſo deſired me to be well verſed in all the caſuiſtical Writers, and chief Schoolmen; for they debate Matters to the Bottom; diſſect every Virtue, and every Vice, into its many Degrees and Parts; and ſhew, how near they can come to one another without touching. And this Knowlege, he ſaid, might be uſeful to me, when I came to be a Pariſh-Prieſt.

Following the Advice of *all* theſe Counſellors, as well as I could, I lighted my Candle early in the Morning, and put it out late at Night. In this Labour I had been ſweating for ſome Years, till *Ruſticus*, at my firſt Acquaintance with him, ſeeing my Way of Life, ſaid to me, Had you lived about Seventeen hundred Years ago, you had ſtood juſt in the ſame Place as I ſtand now. I cannot read; and therefore, ſays he, all theſe Hundreds of Thouſands of diſputing Books, and Doctrine-Books, which theſe Seventeen hundred Years have produced, ſtand not in my Way; they are the ſame thing to me, as if they had never been. And, had you lived at the Time mentioned, you had juſt eſcaped them all, as I do now; becauſe, though you are a very good Reader, there was then none of them to be read.

Could you therefore, be content to be one of the primitive Christians, who were as good as any that have been since; you may spare all this Labour. Take only the Gospel into your Hands; deny yourself; renounce the Lusts of the Flesh; set your Affections on Things above; call upon God for his Holy Spirit; walk by Faith, and not by Sight; adore the holy Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Image and Likeness you was at first created; and in whose Name and Power you have been baptized, to be again the living Likeness, and holy Habitation, of his Life, and Light, and Holy Spirit.

Look up to *Christ*, as your Redeemer, your Regenerator, your second *Adam*; look at him, as truly he is, the *Wisdom and Power of God*, sitting at his Right Hand in Heaven, giving forth Gifts unto Men; governing, sanctifying, teaching, and enlightening with his Holy Spirit, all those that are spiritually-minded; who live in Faith, and Hope, and Prayer, to be redeemed from the Nature and Power of this evil World. Follow but this simple, plain Spirit of the Gospel, loving God with all your Heart, and your Neighbour as yourself; and then you are Christ's

Disciple,

Disciple, and have his Authority to *let the Dead bury their Dead.*

God is a Spirit, in whom you live and move and have your Being; and he stays not till you are a great Scholar, but till you turn from Evil, and love Goodness, to manifest his holy Presence, Power, and Life, within you. It is the Love of Goodness, that must do all for you; this is the Art of Arts; and when this is the ruling Spirit of your Heart, then Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, will come unto you, and make their Abode with you, and lead you into all Truth, though you knew no more of Books than I do.

So ended *Rusticus*. It is not easy for me, *Theophilus*, to tell you, how much Good I received from this simple Instruction of honest *Master Rusticus*; for Master I may well call him, since he, in so few Words, taught me a better Lesson of Wisdom, than ever I had heard before.

What a Project was it, to be grasping after the Knowlege of all the Opinions, Doctrines, Disputes, Heresies, Schisms, Councils, Canons, Alterations, Additions, Inventions, Corruptions, Reformations, Sects, and Churches, which 1700 Years had brought forth through all the Extent of the Christian World! What a Project this, in order to

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be a *Divine*, that is, in order to bear *true Witness* to the Power of *Christ*, as a Deliverer from the Evil of Flesh, and Blood, and Hell, and Death, and a Raiser of a New Birth and Life from above! For as this is the divine Work of *Christ*, so he only is a *true* and *able Divine*, that can bear a faithful Testimony to this *divine Work* of *Christ*.

How easy was it for me to have seen with *Rusticus*, that all this Labyrinth of learned Inquiry into such a dark, thorny Wilderness of Notions, Facts, and Opinions, could signify no more to me now, to my own Salvation, to my Interest in *Christ*, and obtaining the Holy Spirit of God, than if I had lived before it had any Beginning! But the blind Appetite of Learning gave me no Leisure to apprehend so plain a Truth. Books of Divinity indeed I have not done with; but I will esteem none to be such, but those that make known to my Heart the *inward Power* and *Redemption* of *Jesus Christ*. Nor will I seek for any thing even from such Books, but *that* which I ask of God in Prayer; *viz.* how better to know, more to abhor and resist the Evil that is in my *own Nature*; and how to attain a *supernatural Birth* of the Divine Life brought forth in me: All besides this is *Pushpin*. The shipwrecked

Man

Man wants only to get to Shore. Did we see the Truth of our State as he does, we should have but one Want, and that would be, to get Possession of our first created State. There is no Misery but in the Evil that is in our own fallen State; this is our Shipwreck, and great Distress; nor is there any Happiness, but in having the first Life of God, and all Goodness, opened again in the Soul. He that is not intent upon this one Thing needful, is not a wise Christian, much less a *Divine*, or one qualified to make known to others the Mystery of the Power of *Christ* in the Work of Redemption.

But I now go back to that which I first spoke of; and though I give up all that I said of putting out *Jacob Behmen* in new Language, with Comments, *&c.* yet I must still desire, that, some way or other, he may be made more plain and intelligible; call it by what Name you please.

Theophilus. *Jacob Behmen* may be considered, (1.) As a Teacher of the true Ground of the Christian Religion. (2.) As a Discoverer of the false Antichristian Church, from its first Rise in *Cain*, through every Age of the World, to its present State in all, and every Sect of the present divided *Christendom*. (3.) As a Guide to the Truth of all

all the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God. In theſe Three reſpects, which contain all that any one can poſſibly want to know or learn from any Teacher; he is the ſtrongeſt, the plaineſt, the moſt open, intelligible, awakening, convincing Writer, that ever was. As to all theſe Three Matters, he ſpeaks to every one, as himſelf ſaith, *in the Sound of a Trumpet.* And here to pretend to be an Explainer of him, or make him fitter for our Apprehenſion, in theſe great Matters, is as vain, as if a Man ſhould pipe through a *Straw*, to make the Sound of a *Trumpet* better heard by us.

Further, he may be conſidered, (4.) As a Relater of Depths opened in himſelf, of Wonders which his Spirit had ſeen and felt in his *Ternario ſancto.* Now in this reſpect he is no Teacher, nor his Reader a Learner; but all that he ſaith is only for the ſame End as St. *Paul* ſpoke of his having been in the Third Heaven, and hearing Things not poſſible to be ſpoken in human Words. And yet in theſe Matters it is, that moſt of his Readers, eſpecially if they are Scholars, are chiefly employed; every one in his way trying to become Maſters of them. Thus, when he firſt appeared in *Engliſh*, many Perſons of this Nation, of the greateſt Wit

and

and Abilities, became his Readers; who, inſtead of entering into his *one only* Deſign, which was their *own Regeneration* from an earthly to an heavenly Life, turned *Chymiſts*, and ſet up Furnaces to regenerate *Metals*, in Search of the Philoſophers Stone. And yet, of all Men in the World, no one has ſo deeply, and from ſo true a Ground, laid open the exceeding Vanity of ſuch Labour, and utter Impoſſibility of Succeſs in it from any Art or Skill in the Uſe of Fire. And this muſt with Truth be affirmed of him, that there is not any poſſible Error, that you can fall into in the Uſe of his Books, but what he gives you Notice of beforehand, and warns you againſt it in the moſt ſolemn Manner; and tells you, that the Blame muſt be yours, if you fall into it. Neither is there any Queſtion that you can put, nor Advice or Direction that you can aſk, but what he has over and over ſpoke to; telling you, in the plaineſt Manner, what the *Myſtery* is which his Books contain; *how*, and by *whom*, and for what *End*, they are to be read.

There are Two Sorts of People to whom he forbids the Uſe of his Books, as uncapable of any Benefit from them, and who will rather receive Hurt, than any Good from them. The Firſt Sort he ſhews in theſe Words:

" Loving

" Loving Reader, if thou loveſt the Vanity " of the Fleſh ſtill, and art not in an earneſt " Purpoſe on the Way to the New Birth, in- " tending to be a New Man, then leave the " above-written Words in theſe Prayers un- " named, or elſe they will turn to a Judg- " ment of God in thee.*" *Again*, " Reader, " I admoniſh you ſincerely, if you be not in " the Way of the Prodigal, or loſt Son, re- " turning to his Father again, that you leave " my Book, and read it not; it will do you " Harm.——But if you will not take Warn- " ing, I will be guiltleſs; blame Nobody but " yourſelf †."

In this Advice, ſo different from that of other Writers, he ſhews the Truth and Reality of his own regenerated State; and that the very ſame Spirit ſpeaks in him, as formerly ſaid, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.——Unleſs a Man deny himſelf, and forſake all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple.——No Man can come unto me, except the Father draweth him.——Except a Man be born again from above, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.—He that is of God, heareth God's Word.—Come unto me, all ye that labour, are weary and heavy-laden.* For all theſe Texts of Scripture ſay that very

* Repent. *p.* 42. † Three Prin.

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ſelf-ſame thing that *Jacob Behmen* doth, when he abſolutely requires his Reader to be in the Way of the returning Prodigal. It is not Rules of Morality obſerved, or an outward blameleſs Form of Life, that will do: For Pride, Vanity, Envy, Self-love, and Love of the World, can be, and often are, the Heart of ſuch a Morality of Life. But the State of the *loſt Son* is quite another thing; and muſt be the State of every Man: As ſoon as he *comes to himſelf*, and has ſeeing Eyes, he will then, like him, ſee himſelf far from home; that he has loſt his firſt Paradiſe, his heavenly Father, and the Dignity of his firſt Birth; that he is a poor, beggarly Slave in a foreign Land, hungry, ragged, and ſtarving, amongſt the loweſt Kind of Beaſts, not ſo well fed and cloathed as they are: When thus finding himſelf, he ſaith, *I will ariſe, and go to my Father*, &c. then has he his firſt Fitneſs for the Myſteries opened in *Jacob Behmen*'s Writings; for they are addreſſed to Man only in this ſuppoſed State; they have no Fitneſs to him but in this State; and therefore no one, whether *Jew*, Chriſtian, or Deiſt, who does not find and feel himſelf to be the *very loſt Son* deſcribed in the Parable, has any Capacity to receive Benefit from them; but they will be

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a continual Stumbling-block to him. And it is juſt thus with the Goſpel itſelf; wherever it is received and profeſſed, without ſomething of this Preparation of Heart, without this Senſibility of the loſt Son, there it can only be a Stone of ſtumbling, and help the earthly Man to form a Religion of Notions and Opinions from the unfelt Meaning of the Letter of the Goſpel.

Secondly, The other Sort of People, whom he excludes from his Books, and for whom he has writ nothing, are the Men of *Reaſon*, who give themſelves up to the Light of Reaſon, as the true Touchſtone of divine Truths. To theſe he declares over and over, that he has not his Light from Reaſon; and that he writes nothing to Reaſon. *The rational Man*, ſaith he, *underſtands nothing in reference to God; for it is without and not in God.* Again, *The true Underſtanding muſt flow from the* inward Ground, *out of the living Word of God. In which inward Ground, all my Knowlege concerning the divine and natural Ground, hath taken its Riſe, Beginning, and Underſtanding. I am not born of the School of this World, and am a plain ſimple Man; but by God's Spirit and Will am brought, without my own Purpoſe and Deſire, into divine Knowlege in high natural*

*tural Searchings**. Again, *He that will learn to understand the true Way, let him depart from* and forsake his own Reason †. *If my Writings*, says he, *come into your Hands, I would that you should look upon them as of a Child's, in* whom the Highest *has driven his* Work; *for there is that couched therein, which no Reason may understand or comprehend* ‡. Again, *Reason must be blinded*, kept under, and not allowed to *stir* §. Again, *Reason must yield up its own Hearing and Life, and give itself up to God, that God may live in the Understanding of Man, else there is no Finding in the Divine Wisdom. All that is taught and spoken concerning God, without the Spirit of God, is but* Babel ‖. Again, *We must wholly reject our own Reason; it is not available to help us to the Light, but is a mere leading astray, and keeping us back. This we intimate to the Reader, that he may know what he readeth. Let none account it for a Work of outward Reason.* Again, *speaking of the Mystery* **, he saith, *Pray to God the Most High, that he would be pleased to open the Door of Knowlege, without which no Man will understand my Writings; for*

* Epist. *p.* 121. † *P.* 138. ‡ Ibid. *p.* 141. § *P.* 68. ‖ Epist. *p.* 9. ** Three-fold L. *p.* 68. 88.

they surpass the astral Reason; they apprehend and comprehend the Divine Birth; and therefore only the like Spirit can understand them aright. No Reasoning or Speculating reacheth them, unless the Mind be illuminated from God, to the finding of which the Way is faithfully shewn to the seeking Reader.*

And now, *Academicus*, you may see how needless it is to ask me, or any one else, to help you to understand his Works: He himself has given you all the Assistance that can be given: He has laid open before you, in the utmost Plainness, both the Nature of the *Mystery*, and the *one only* possible Way that you can partake of it.

Academicus. You speak often of the *Mystery*: Pray, What am I to understand by it?

Theophilus. You are to understand by it, the *deep and true Ground* of all Things. A *Mystery*, in which the Birth and Beginning of *eternal Nature*, or the first Workings of the *inconceivable God*, opening and manifesting his hidden Triune Deity in an outward State of Glory, in the Splendor of united Fire, Light, and Spirit, all kindled and distinguished, all united and beatified by the *hidden Three*. In this eternal Nature, all in-

* Epist. *p.* 138.

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ward Powers, all the *hidden* Riches of the incomprehenſible Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, are from Eternity to Eternity brought forth into outward Majeſty, and viſible Glory. In which Triune Opening of heavenly Glory, Power, and Majeſty, the Triune God beholdeth himſelf as in his *own Manifeſtation*, is cloathed as with his *own Garment*, dwelleth as in his *own Habitation*, and worketh all his Wonders of Wiſdom and Omnipotence in and by, and according to, the *poſſible Powers* of this eternal Nature. For this eternal Nature is the *firſt-Poſſibility* of all After-beings and Things; for before, or without, this eternal Nature, all is an eternal, ſilent, ſtill, unmoveable, unperceivable Nothingneſs; and this eternal Nature is the firſt Manifeſtation, the firſt Opening of the divine Omnipotence; and in it are included, in its own infinite Bounds, all the Height and Depth, and Extent, of the divine Wiſdom and Powers. All that God is, and can do, or bring forth from himſelf, is done in and by the Working of his Triune Spirit in this eternal Nature.

This is the great Scene of his eternal Wiſdom and Omnipotence, in which new Wonders are eternally riſing up, and declaring the fathomleſs Depths of the Riches

of the invisible Triune Deity. And to say, that God can do no more, than what he can do through and by the possible Powers of this eternal Nature, is only saying, that he can do no more than what he can do by himself, because this eternal Nature is the eternal Manifestation of the total God, or an Out-birth of that which the Deity is, in its invisible Power and Deity.

Out of this transcendent eternal Nature, which is as universal and immense as the Deity itself, do all the highest Beings, Cherubims and Seraphins, all the Hosts of Angels, and all intelligent Spirits, receive their Birth, Existence, Substance, and Form. They are all so many different, finite, bounded Forms of the heavenly Fire, and Light of eternal Nature, into which creaturely Beings the invisible Triune God breatheth his invisible Spirit, by which they become both the true Children and Likeness of the invisible Deity, and also the true Offspring of his eternal Nature; and are fitted to rejoice with God, to live in the Life of God, and live and work, and have their Being, in that eternal Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven, in which the Deity itself liveth and worketh. And they are one, and united in one, God in them, and they in God, according to the

Prayer

Prayer of Christ for his Disciples; That they, and he, and his Holy Father, might be united in one*.

This is in Part what you are first to understand concerning the Mystery.

But, *Secondly*, It is a *Mystery*, in which the Creation and Fall of Angels, with all its Consequences in them, and their Kingdom; in which the System of this visible Universe, *why*, and from *what*, and how it came to be as it is; the Birth of the Sun and the Planets, why and how they come to have such Difference in Nature, Place, and Office, as also of all the Stars; the Nature of every creaturely Life, and Ground of its vast Variety; the Cause of every inanimate dead Thing; a Mystery in which the Creation, Dignity, and Perfection, of the first angelic Man in Paradise; the whole Kingdom of Nature, and Kingdom of Grace; their Connexion, Difference, and mutually affecting and working upon one another under the Providence of the invisible Spirit of God, from the Beginning to the End of Time, are all unfolded from their first Root and Cause.

Thirdly, It is a *Mystery*, in which the Ground of Christian Redemption, its whole

* John xvi.

Nature, abſolute Neceſſity, and the working of all its Parts both in the Redeemer and in the Redeemed, are ſet forth in the utmoſt Degree of Clearneſs; where the whole Proceſs of *Chriſt*, as incarnate, living, ſuffering, dying, riſing from the Dead, aſcending into Heaven, and ſitting at the Right Hand of God, and governing his Church on Earth by his Holy Spirit; and all the practical Duties of the Goſpel, whether of Faith and Hope, or of Self-denial; dying to this World, and ſtrict Conformity to the Life and Spirit of Chriſt; are all demonſtrated from the deepeſt Ground of the Nature of Things, to be abſolutely neceſſary to the Recovery and Redemption of the fallen human Nature.

This, Sir, is, in ſome Degree, the *Myſtery* which it has pleaſed the Spirit of God to open in this plain and unlearned Man.

Academicus. Well, *Theophilus*, I intirely conſent to this Account you have given of it, and think it is ſufficiently ſupported by what is to be found in his Books; they ſeem to mean all theſe great Matters which you mentioned. But then, Sir, give me Leave to tell you, that I think it is impoſſible for you to defend what you have ſaid above concerning *Reaſon*; or to ſhew the Unreaſonableneſs of my demanding *rational* Illuſtrations and

Comments. For if this is the Truth, that his Works contain the *Ground* and *Philoſophy* of all Nature, and all Creatures; ſurely they muſt not only allow the Uſe of our Reaſon, but call for the higheſt and moſt acute Exerciſe of it. For what can enter into the Reaſons and Philoſophy of Things, but Reaſon? Or what do all theſe great Matters appeal to, but to our Reaſon? I ſee no Poſſibility of denying this; and if this be granted, all that has been ſaid about ſilencing our Reaſon, muſt be given up.

Theophilus. The Concluſion, my Friend, that you here think to be ſo juſt and ſtrong, as not poſſible to be denied, is ſo far from being ſo, that it is a glaring Abſurdity; and the quite contrary to that one only true Concluſion, which you ſhould have made, and which ſo eaſily and naturally flowed from what was ſaid. For if the *Myſtery is the deep Ground of* all Things, of all Nature, and all Creatures, *&c.* then the one Concluſion that infallibly flows from it, is this, that no Acuteneſs or Ability of natural Reaſon can ſo much as look into it. For natural Reaſon is no older than Fleſh and Blood; it has no higher a Nature or Birth than *natural Doubting*; it had no Exiſtence when Nature began its firſt Work-

ings, and therefore can bear no Witneſs to them. It was not preſent, had no Eyes, when Things firſt came forth; it never ſtood in the Centre, from whence the Birth of every thing muſt ariſe; it never ſaw the Forming of the firſt Seeds of every Life: And yet the *Myſtery*, you ſee, contains all this: And therefore the one plain and neceſſary Concluſion is this; That natural Reaſon is, and muſt be, as incapable of entering into this Myſtery, as Fleſh and Blood is incapable of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Behold, now, what a flagrant Proof you have given of the Vanity, Weakneſs, and Blindneſs of natural Reaſon in divine Matters. Your Reaſon ſaw, with the utmoſt Certainty, that the Myſtery muſt be an Appeal to Reaſon, merely becauſe it contained ſuch an Height and Depth of a divine Philoſophy; and yet the Height and Depth of its Matters is the *one full* Proof, that Reaſon can have nothing to do with it. This may ſhew you by what means *Babel* has built itſelf all over the Chriſtian World. For, by the Light of this *Babylonian* Reaſon, the Defenders and Oppoſers of Doctrines confute one another with ſuch a Certainty and Strength of Reaſon, as you ſaw, that Reaſon muſt be the only Judge of the Myſtery, from which

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it is juſt as much excluded by its own Nature, as the *Mole* under-ground is, by its Nature, excluded from the Flight and Sight of the towering Eagle.

Academicus. Pray then tell me, How a Man is to attain the Knowlege of the Myſtery, or have any Share in the Light of it.

Theophilus. There is but one poſſible Way, and that is this: It muſt be born in you. All true Knowlege, either of God or Nature, muſt be born in you. You cannot poſſibly know any thing of God, but ſo far as God is manifeſted in you; ſo far as his Light and Holy Spirit is born in you, as it is born in him, and liveth and worketh in you, as it liveth and worketh in him. A diſtant, abſent, ſeparate God, is an unknown God. For God can only manifeſt God, as Light can only manifeſt Light, and Darkneſs make Darkneſs to be known.

Again, you can have no real Knowlege of Nature, and its inward working Power, but ſo far as the Workings of Nature, and the Birth of Things, are a Working and Birth in yourſelf. Natural Reaſon may trade in the Outſide of Things; it may meaſure, and make Draughts of Magnitude, Height, and Diſtance of Things on the Earth, and above the

the Earth; it may make many and fine Experiments of the Powers of every Element: But then this is going no farther into the Ground of Nature, than when the *Potter* makes curious Veſſels with his Clay and Fire.

To count the Stars, to obſerve their Places or Motions, is juſt the ſame Height of natural Knowlege, as when the Shepherd counts his Sheep, and obſerves their Time of Breeding.

This World, with all its Stars, Elements, and Creatures, is come out of the inviſible World; it has not the ſmalleſt Thing, or the ſmalleſt Quality of any thing, but what is come forth from thence; and therefore every Quality of every thing is what it is, and worketh *that* which worketh, by a ſecret Power and Nature in and from the inviſible World. *Bitter*, *ſweet*, *ſour*, *hard*, *ſoft*, *hot*, *cold*, &c. have all of them their firſt Seed and Birth in the inviſible World, called eternal Nature. The irrational Animals of this World feel all theſe Things: The rational Man goes farther; he can reaſon and diſpute about their outward Cauſes and Effects: But the Myſtery of eternal Nature muſt firſt be opened in Man, before he can give the divine Philoſophy of them. For as they all come from thence, have their Nature, Birth,

and Growth, from thence; ſo no Philoſophy, but that which comes from thence, can give the true Ground of them.

If Man himſelf was not all theſe Three Things; *viz.* (1.) A Birth of the holy Deity; (2.) A Birth of eternal Nature; and, (3.) Alſo a Microcoſm of all this great outward World; that is, of every thing in it, its Stars and Elements; and if the Properties of every creaturely Life were not in an hidden Birth in him; no Omnipotence of God could open the Knowlege of divine and natural Things in him.

For God can only manifeſt *that*, which there is to be manifeſted; and therefore only open *that*, which before lay unopened, and as in a State of Hiddenneſs or Death. Nothing can come forth from Man, or any Creature, but that which firſt had its Seed in him; and to think, that any Knowlege can be put into him, but that which is a Birth of his own Life, is as abſurd as to think, that the Tree and its Branches may firſt grow, and then be brought to the Root.

We are led into Miſtakes about this Matter from the common Practice of the World, which calls every thing Knowlege, that the Reaſon, Wit, or Humour of Man prompts him to diſcourſe about; whether it be Fiction,

tion, Conjecture, Report, Hiſtory, Criticiſm, Rhetoric, or Oratory: All this paſſes for Sterling Knowlege; whereas it is only the Activity of Reaſon, playing with its own empty Notions.

From this Idea of Knowlege it is, that when this *rational* Man turns his Thoughts to the Study of Divinity, he is content with the ſame Knowlege of divine Matters, as he had in theſe Exerciſes of his Reaſon; and he proceeds in the ſame Manner, as when he ſtudied Hiſtory and Rhetoric.

He turns his Mind to Hearſay, to Conjecture, to Criticiſm, and great Names; and thinks he is then a Member of the true Church, when he knows it as plainly as he knows the antient Commonwealth of *Rome*. His Knowlege of the Being of God ſtands upon the ſame Bottom, and is made known to him by the ſame Means and Methods of Proof, as he comes to be aſſured, that once upon a Time there was a *Firſt* Man, and his Name was *Adam*. His Knowlege of the Kingdom of Heaven is looked upon to be ſufficient, as ſoon as he knows it, as he knows that there is ſuch a Place as *Conſtantinople*. When he turns his Inquiries into the Myſteries of Chriſtian Redemption, he looks as much out of himſelf, as when he

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is searching into the Antiquities of *Greece*; and appeals to the same Helps for this Knowlege, as when he wants to know the inward Structure of *Solomon*'s Temple, and all its Services, *&c.*

This is the great Delusion which has long overspread the Christian World; and all Countries, and all Libraries, are the Proof of it. It is this Power and Dominion of Reason in religious Matters, that *Jacob Behmen* so justly calls the *Antichrist in Babel*; for it leads Men from the Life and Truth of the Mysteries of *Christ*, to put a carnal Trust in a confused Multitude of contrary Notions, Inventions, and Opinions. And the thing is unavoidable, it cannot be otherwise with *Reason*; it cannot do more Good with, or make a better Use of, Gospel Doctrines; it is *Antichrist* as soon as ever it is admitted to debate and state the Nature of any divine Truth. And that for these Two great Reasons: *First*, Because it has absolutely the same Incapacity for it, as the Man that is born blind hath for the Light. Wherein now lieth the Incapacity of the blind Man, to speak or think any thing truly about Light? It is because he is born and bred in another World, where nothing of Light ever did or can enter; it is because there is the *Gulph*

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of a whole Birth betwixt him and the Light of this World; and therefore, though he lives ever so long, reasons ever so much, or hears ever so many Speeches, about the Light, all that he gets by it is only more false Ideas of the unknown Thing.

Now this is strictly the Incapacity of Reason, to speak, or think, any thing truly of the Divine Life. It is because it is born and bred in another World, in the Darkness of Flesh and Blood, into which no Perception or Sensibility of God and Heaven can enter; it is because there is the *Gulph* of a whole Birth betwixt it, and the Light of God and Heaven; and therefore, let Reason, from Age to Age, hear, read, and dispute ever so much about the Light of God and Heaven, all that it can get by it is only to be enriched with more and more Fictions and Falsities about the unknown Thing.

Secondly, Natural Reason, whenever judging or ruling in divine Matters, must be *Antichrist*, because it cannot make any other Use of the Mysteries of Religion, or do any thing else with them, but in the *same Spirit*, and for the *same Ends*, that it receiveth and useth the Things of this World. It matters not, what are the Names or Natures of the Things, whether you call them spiritual or temporal;

temporal: Natural Reaſon can make but one and the ſame Uſe of them; it can only turn them to an earthly Uſe, to worldly Proſperity, to private Intereſt, Honour, Power, or Diſtinction. And the Thing is unavoidable, it is impoſſible to be otherwiſe; it is not a Fault that Reaſon might amend, if it would; but is as much its own Nature, as it is natural to Flame to aſcend. Now every thing muſt act according to its Nature; every Kind of Life muſt be for itſelf, for its own Good. Now Reaſon has no higher a Birth and Nature, than the Spirit of this World; it muſt be as worldly as its Birth is, and cannot poſſibly have any thing elſe but worldly Views, and the Intereſts of its own Fleſh and Blood, in every thing that it can make any uſe of. This is as eſſential to the natural Reaſon of Man, as to the natural Subtlety of every Beaſt; for they have both the ſame Original from the Light and Life of this World, have both the ſame earthly Nature, and can act only in an earthly Manner, to ſerve the ſame Ends of an earthly Life. The Reaſon of the one has no more of God and the Divine Nature in it, than the Subtlety of the other. And hence it is, that Man, following only the Cunning of his natural Reaſon, is often more miſchievous than the worſt of Beaſts.

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And thus, you see how Reason, ruling in Divine Things, is and must be *Antichrist:* First, As it turns the living Mysteries of God into lifeless Ideas, and vain Opinions; and, *Secondly*, As it sets up a worldly Kingdom of Strife, Hatred, Envy, Division, and Persecution, in Defence of them. And therefore it is a fundamental Truth, that Man has no Capacity for Divine Knowlege, till the Particle of Divine Life, lost in the Fall, is awakened; in which alone, the Mystery of God and the Divine Nature can have a Birth.

Academicus. You have carried your Point, *Theophilus*, with a high Hand, and I rejoice in seeing this Matter so well proved.——But still I would ask you something, that I know not how to express; I would fain understand more clearly, how this Mystery of God, and eternal Nature, is to be *born* in me.

Theophilus. Every thing, *Academicus*, is, and must be, its *own Proof*; and can only be known from and by itself. There is no Knowlege of any thing, but where the Thing itself is, and is found, and possessed. Life, and every Kind and Degree of Life, is only known by Life; and so far as Life reaches, so far is there Knowlege, and no farther. Whatever Knowlege you can get by the Searching and Working of your own active Reason,

Reaſon, is only like that Knowlege, which you may be ſaid to have got, when you have ſearched for a Needle in a Load of Straw, till you have found it.

For nothing that is brought into the Mind from *without*, or is only an Idea beheld by our reaſoning Faculty, is any more *our Knowlege*, than the ſeeing our natural Face in a Glaſs, is ſeeing our *own Selves*. And all the Ideas or Images that your Reaſon can form of any abſent, unpoſſeſſed Thing, is no more a Part of your own Knowlege, than your drawing a Picture of your own Hand is making a Member of your own Body. It is therefore a vain and fruitleſs Inquiry, to be aſking beforehand for the Knowlege of any *unpoſſeſſed* Matters; for Knowlege can only be yours, as *Sickneſs* and *Health* is yours, not conveyed into you by a Hearſay Notion, but the Fruit of your own Perception and Senſibility of that which you are, and that which you have in yourſelf. How often have you been warned againſt this Procedure, in Words like theſe? "Therefore let the Reader be "warned not to dive farther into theſe very "deep Writings, nor plunge his Will deeper, "than ſo far as he *apprehendeth:* He ſhould "always reſt ſatisfied with his *Apprehenſion*; "for in his Apprehenſion, he ſtandeth yet

" in that which hath its Reality; and " therefore he erreth not, how deep ſoever " the Spirit leadeth him: For to one more " will be given than to another. And this " is the *only Mark* to be obſerved, that every " one continue ſtedfaſt in Humility towards " God, and ſubmit himſelf, that he may " make the Will and the Deed as he pleaſeth. " When you do that, you are in yourſelf as " dead; for you deſire nothing but God's " Will, and the Will of God *is your Life*, " which goeth inward even to the Opening " of the higheſt Myſteries*."

One would have thought, *Academicus*, that this Advice, if only from the uncommon Nature of it, ſhould have had more Effect upon you. For it is not only new to you, but to every Reader; there being nothing like it, either for the Senſe, the Sobriety, or the Depth of its Matter, ever given by the wiſeſt of Philoſophers to their Readers.

Truth, my Friend, whatever you may think of it, is no leſs than the *Saviour* and Redeemer of the World.

Hear therefore its own Language: *If any Man will be my Diſciple, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs, and come after me.* He does not ſay, Let him get a clear and di-

* Threefold L. p. 158.

ſtinct

ſtinct Idea of me, what, and how I am God and Man in the Unity of my Perſon; he only tells him what he is to part with, what he muſt put off, to be made a Child of the Light. Search and look where you will, this Denial of Self is the one only poſſible Way to the Truth. For nothing has ſeparated us from Truth, nothing ſtands betwixt us and Truth, but this Self of an earthly Life, which is not from God, but from our wandering out of our firſt created State.

God created us in and for the Light; and had *Adam* kept his firſt State, he had not been an ignorant, blind Pilgrim in the Darkneſs of this World, but the illuſtrious Opener of all its Wonders in the Light of God. But as this Light and Knowlege was loſt in *Adam*, ſo it can only be recovered by him who came to reſtore all that was loſt, and who juſtly called himſelf *the Light of the World*. Would you therefore be a Diſciple of Truth, you muſt not, with *Pilate*, ask, *What is Truth?* or conſult the Schools, how you ſhall form an Idea of it: But you muſt alter your Life, put a Stop to all earthly Luſts, renounce all that you are, and have from Self; give up all the Workings of your own Reaſon, and your own Will; and then, and then only, are you fitted for that *Unction from above*,

which can teach you all Things. But till Christ, who is the one Fountain of Life and Light, be opened in you; it is in vain, that you rise up early, and late take Rest, in Quest of Truth; for he himself hath said, *Without me, ye can do nothing*. And every Son of earthly *Adam*, however naturally enriched with the Spirit, and Light, and Arts of this World, is born, and must remain, a *Spirit in Prison*, till Christ is found to be an inward Preacher, and Light within him. As he is the one Resurrection from the Dead, so is he the one Deliverer from every thing that has the Nature of Death, Darkness, and Ignorance. And to expect seeing Eyes, hearing Ears, and Sensibility of Heart, from any thing but that *eternal Word*, by which we were at first made, is robbing God and Christ of more Honour, is a more idolatrous Departure from the true Worship and Dependence upon him, than if we sometimes hoped to have Good from this or that Saint's praying for us. For this is a Truth, that admits of no Restriction, but reaches from one End of the Earth to the other, that as no Man can come unto the Father, but through the Son; so no one can come at any Divine Knowlege either in Grace or Nature, but through him alone.

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The *Schools* of this World are of no higher a Nature, than the *Markets* of this World; and, when rightly used, serve only to the Ends of this earthly Life. But as Markets and Traffick seldom keep within their just Bounds, but become serviceable to Vanity, earthly Lusts, and all the Luxury of Life; so it mostly happens in our learned Labours; we grow old, and blear-eyed, in Studies that nourish Pride and Envy, Division and Contenton; and only help our old Man to be conent with the Riches of his fallen Nature, andfeel no Necessity of being born again.

Vould you therefore be a *Divine* Philosopher, you must be a *true Christian*; for Darkne is every-where, but in the Kingdom of Gd, and Truth no-where to be found by Mn, but in a *New Birth* from above. Man ws created in and for the Truth; that is, h was created in the Truth of the Divine Ight, to see and hear, to taste and feel, to fid and enjoy all Things in the Truth of th Divine Life brought forth in him. And terefore it is, that for fallen Man there is ht one Remedy; it is only *the Truth* that an make him free. Truth is the one only *esting-place* of the Soul; it is its *Atonement* and *Peace* with God; all is, and must e, Disquiet, a Succession of lying Vanities,

till the Soul is again in the Truth, in which God at first created it. And therefore said the *Truth, Learn of me; for I am meek, and lowly of Heart; and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls.*

Academicus. Pray, *Theophilus*, stop a while: Surely your Zeal carries you too far. All Ages of the World have seemed to agree in this, that the Gospel teaches purely the Simplicity of a godly Life; calls no Man to be a Philosopher, nor gives the smallest Instruction in Matters that relate to Philosoply.

Theophilus. All this, *Academicus*, is very true; but then, this very Simplicity and Plainness of the Gospel, turning Man only from this World, to a Faith, and Hope, and Desire of God, is the *one* Reason, and *full Proof*, that it alone is a true Guide into the highest School of Divine Wisdom and Philosophy; not only because Goodness is our greatest Wisdom, but because the Mysteries of God, of Grace, of Nature, of Time and Eternity, can no other possible way be opened in Man, but by this Simplicity of a godly Life taught in the Gospel; because *only* the godly Life hath Knowlege of God; just as the creaturely Life hath only Knowlege of the Creature, and the painful Life hath Knowlege of Pain. The Scripture saith, *that only the Spirit of*

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God knoweth the Things of God. And indeed, how can it possibly be otherwise? For since the Spirit of God is the Spirit and Life that goeth through all Nature and Creature, and only openeth its *own hidden* Powers therein; since it is that which is the Former of every thing; that which makes every thing to have the Life that it hath, and to work as it worketh; nothing but the Spirit of God can possibly know the Things of God: And therefore, of Necessity, this Spirit of God must be in Man, and work in Man, as it is in Nature, and worketh in Nature, before Man can enter into the Knowlege and Working of God in Nature. And therefore here you have two immutable, and fundamental Truths: (1.) That all our Ignorance of God and Nature is, and must be, purely and solely, the *Want of the Spirit and Life of God in us:* And, (2.) That therefore the one only Way to Divine Knowlege is the Way of the Gospel, which calls and leads us to a New Birth of the *Divine Nature brought forth in us.*

Academicus. I have nothing that I can, or would, object to what you have said. But still I must say, that I do not enough apprehend how the *Spirit and Life of God* must thus, of all Necessity, be born in us; nor, indeed, do I intirely comprehend how it is done.

Human Reaſon, or human Inſtruction, I ſee plain enough, cannot help me to any Divine Light. But ſuppoſe God ſhould ſend an Angel to inſtruct me, and that frequently, would not Divine Knowlege be then imparted to me? And yet this would not be a Birth of God in me. Or, will you ſay, that God cannot ſufficiently inſtruct me, even by the higheſt of his Angels?

Theophilus. An Angel, Sir, may inſtruct you, as the Scriptures inſtruct you; but it is only ſuch an Inſtruction, as may direct you where and how to obtain that Light, which neither the Letter of Scripture, nor the Voice of an Angel, can bring forth in you. The higheſt Angel neither hath, nor ever can have, any more of a redeeming Power in it, than the dead Paper on which the Scriptures are written. But you are to obſerve, and mark it well, that you cannot have Divine Light from any other Thing, but that which hath full Power to redeem you: For Light is not only Life, but the Perfection, and higheſt State of it; and therefore nothing can bring forth Light, but that which can bring forth the Truth and Perfection of Life.

Every other Thing, beſides the Life and Light of God, ſtands only in a State of *miniſterial Service* towards you: Whether it

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be Words of a Message from God, written on Paper, engraven on Tables of Stone, or spoken by the Mouth of an *Angel*, a *Prophet*, or *Apostle*; be it which it will, it is only a creaturely Thing; and its creaturely Service can rise no higher, or go any farther, than to shew the true Way to him, who only himself can be the Truth, the Life, and the Light in you. For the Light of God cannot, even by God himself, be communicated to you by any Creature; and the Reason is, because the Light of God is God himself: It is the Light of his own Life: And therefore only himself can bring it forth wherever it is; and no Creature can possibly partake of his Light, but by having a Birth in and from the Divine Nature: For the Light of God can never be separate from the Divine Nature, or be any where but where the Divine Birth is. And thus you fully see, that all that can be divinely known, either in Heaven, or on Earth, can only be known in that *one Way*, and by that *one Means*, by which fallen Man can be saved; namely, by a New Birth of the Light and Spirit of God within us. And therefore the simple Way of the Gospel is the one only Way to attain all the Knowlege of all that, which can be known of God and Nature: For nothing

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can manifest God and Nature, but the Spirit of God working in Man, as he worketh in Nature, which can only be done by a New Birth of the Divine Nature brought forth in Man: But when Man is thus born again of God, then the Life and Spirit of God is in him, and worketh in him, as it doth in Nature. And thus it is that Man can only be a Divine Philosopher when Christ, who is the Light of God, and the Light of Nature, is revealed in him. Then he is in that living *Word*, and that living Word is in him, by which all Things were at first made; and which maketh, createth, and worketh in him, as it worketh in all Things, both in Heaven and Earth.

Academicus. I never expected to have seen the Gospel New Birth proved to be the only open Gate to all that *Divine Knowlege* which any Son of *Adam* ever had, or can have. But you have proved it to be so, beyond all Possibility of Denial. And I now only want to have you go on in this Doctrine of the New Birth; for I am persuaded, you can still add something to *that*, which has already been said upon it, both as to the Ground, and Nature, and Fruits of it.

Theophilus. You must remember, *Academicus*, that all that I can by Discourse, from the Beginning to the End of this Matter, do

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for you, amounts only to thus much: It is like giving you a full Assurance of a wonderful Pearl of glorious Virtues, hidden in the Ground of a certain Field, and shewing you every Step of the Way you must take to find it. Now, if, from Month to Month, you should be inquiring and hearing of some new Powers and Virtues of this heavenly Pearl; what Good does all this Discourse and Hearsay do you? You are just as far from the Pearl itself, and have no more of it, than when you first heard of it; and would be in the same Distance from it, though you was always, to the End of your Life, loving to hear and talk about it. I have had no other End in all that is said of the New Birth, but to assure you of the Truth of the Thing, and the true Way to it. Now the Way to the New Birth lies wholly in your Will to it; and every Step that you can take, consists in a continual Dying to that selfish corrupt Will, which you have from Flesh and Blood. Nothing can make any Change in you, but the Change of your Will. For every thing, be it what it will, *is a Birth of that Will*, which worketh in you. You have nothing therefore to inquire after, nor any thing that you can judge of yourself by, but the State of your Mind, the Working of your Will and Desire. These

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will give you more Light than all the Men or Books in the World can give you: Where these are, there are you; and what these are, that are you: There you live, and to that you belong; and there you must have all the Good or Evil that can be called yours.

For nothing leads or carries you any-where, nothing generates either Life or Death in you, but the Working of your Mind, Will, and Desire. If your Will is angelic, you are an Angel, and angelic happiness must be yours. If your Will is with God, you work with God, God is then the Life of your Soul, and you will have your Life with God to all Eternity. If you follow an earthly Will, every Step you take is a Departure from God, till you become as incapable of God, and the Life of God, as the Animals of this World. If your Will worketh in Pride and Self-exaltation, in Envy and Wrath, in Hatred and Ill-will, in Deceit, Hypocrisy, and Falseness, you work with the Devil, you are generating his Nature within you, and making yourself ready for the Kingdom of Hell. And thus it is, that *our Works follow us*; and that *every one will be rewarded according to his Works*; and none can reap any thing else but that which he hath sown. And the Seed of every thing that can grow in us, is our Will. The Will maketh the Beginning,

ginning, the Middle, and the End of every thing; it is the only Workman in Nature; and every thing is its Work. It has all Power; its Works cannot be hindered; it carries all before it; it creates as it goes; and all Things are poſſible to it. It enters where-ever it wills, and finds every thing that it ſeeks; for its ſeeking is its finding. The Will over-rules all Nature, becauſe Nature is its Offspring, and born of it; for all the Properties of Nature, whether they be Good or Evil, in Darkneſs or in Light, in Love or in Hatred, in Wrath or in Meekneſs, in Pride or Humility, in Trouble or Joy, are all of them the Offspring or Birth of the Will; as that liveth, ſo they live; and as that changeth, ſo they change. So that whatever you are, or whatever you feel, is all owing to the working and creating Power of your own Will. This is your God or your Devil, your Heaven or your Hell; and you have only ſo much of one, or the other, as your Will, which is the firſt Mover, is either given up to the one, or to the other.

For where the Will of Man is not, there he hath nothing; and where his Will is, there is all that *Something* which he hath, be it of what Kind it will; and it is inſeparable from him, till his Will worketh contrary to it.

Academicus.

Academicus. Whence hath the Will of Man this mighty Power, that it can have nothing, but that which itſelf hath willed?

Theophilus. You might as well aſk, why a *Circle* muſt be perfectly round, or a ſtrait Line free from every Degree of Crookedneſs. For as it is not a Circle till it is perfectly round, nor a ſtrait Line till it is free from Crookedneſs; ſo the Will is not in Being, but ſo far as it is free, is its own Mover, and can have nothing but that which it willeth. *Secondly*, The Will is not a made Thing, which is made out of ſomething, or that came out of ſome different State, into the State of a Will. But the free Will of Man is a true and real Birth from the free, eternal, uncreated Will of God, which willed to have a creaturely Offspring of itſelf, or to ſee itſelf in a creaturely State. And therefore the Will of Man hath the Nature of Divine Freedom; hath the Nature of Eternity, and the Nature of Omnipotence in it; becauſe it is what it is, and hath what it hath, as a Spark, a Ray, a genuine Birth of the eternal, free, omnipotent Will of God. And therefore, as the Will of God is ſuperior to, and ruleth over all Nature; ſo the Will of Man, derived from the Will of God, is ſuperior to, and ruleth over all his own Nature. And thence it is, that as to

itſelf, and ſo far as its own Nature reacheth, it hath the Freedom and Omnipotence of that Will from which it is deſcended; and can have or receive nothing, but what itſelf doth, and worketh, in and to itſelf.

And herein conſiſteth the infinite Goodneſs of God, in the Birth of all intelligent Creatures; and alſo the exceeding Height, Perfection, and Happineſs of their created State: They are deſcended from God, full of Divine Power; they can will and work with God, and partake of the Divine Happineſs. They can receive no Injuſtice, Hurt, or Violence, either from Nature or Creature; but muſt be only that, which they generate, and have no Evil or Hurt, but that which they do in and to themſelves. All Things ſtand in the Will, and every thing animate or inanimate is the Effect and Produce of that Will, which worketh in it, and formeth it to be that which it is. And every Will, where-ever found, is the Birth and Effect of ſome antecedent Will; for Will can only proceed from Will, till you come to the firſt working Will, which is God himſelf.

And here, my Friend, you have an eaſy Entrance into the true Meaning of many important Paſſages in the Books of *Jacob Behmen*, like thoſe that follow: *All*, ſays he,

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is magical; *the Eternity is magical*:—*Magic is the Mother of all Things.*—*I ſpeak from a magic Ground.*—*Here the Reader muſt have magical Eyes.*—*This hath a magical Underſtanding*, &c. Vulgar Reaſon is offended at theſe Expreſſions, becauſe the Word *Magic* has, for many Ages, been moſtly uſed in a bad Senſe. But don't you be frighted at the Sound of theſe Words; they are not only innocent, but truly good and wiſe, and deeply founded on the Truth of Things. They have the moſt Chriſtian and Divine Meaning; are ſtrictly conformable to the Spirit of the Goſpel, as ſhall be ſhewn by-and-by; and are uſed for the beſt of Ends; namely, to open the true Ground of eternal and temporal Nature, and the Birth of Creatures in each of them. They are to ſhew how the hidden, inviſible Deity acteth and worketh all its Wonders in both theſe Worlds, in one and the ſame uniform Way; as alſo, how every thing in Religion, whether it be a Myſtery of God, a Grace of God, or a Duty of Man, hath its whole Ground, and Nature, and Efficacy, therein.

Now *magic Power* meaneth nothing but the *Working of the Will*, whether it be the Divine, or the creaturely Will; and every thing that is the Work of the Will, and is produced

produced by it, is called its magic Work, which only means, that it is generated by and from the Will, as a Birth brought forth by it. The Will is the Workman, and the Work is that, which it bringeth forth out of itself. So that by these Words you are always to understand these two Things, the *Working, and the Work of the Will.* And now, you may already sufficiently see, that their Meaning is not only innocent and good, but as necessarily, and divinely, to be ascribed to God, as the Power of bringing Things into Existence by the Working of his Will. For here you have the true Ground and Original of the creating Power of God; how every thing that is not God, is yet come from him, and out of him, as so many Births of his invisible Power, breaking forth into Visibility, and sensible Qualities of an outward Life.

The first Manifestation of the invisible God, is that which is called, and is, *eternal Nature*; which is the Eternity of all possible Powers and Qualities of Life, the first Source of every natural Power that can be in any Creature. All these Qualities of Life, in their eternal Birth, and rising from one another by the working Will of God, are the Out-birth, or outward Glory of God, in which he manifests his Triune, invisible Deity in a threefold

Life of Fire, Light, and Spirit, which are the Ground of all the Qualities of Life, Senſibility, Power, and Spirit, that ever were, or can be found in any Creature. Every thing that exiſts, or thinks, or moves, or finds itſelf in any Kind or Degree of Senſibility, is from, and out of, this glaſſy Sea of theſe united Powers of Life. And this whole Manifeſtation of all the poſſible Powers, and Perfection of Life and Glory, is called that Kingdom of Heaven, in which God dwelleth; and is, as it were, his Divine Work-houſe, out of which he is perpetually giving forth new Works, and Forms of Wonder.

This Manifeſtation of God is a *magic Birth* from the Triune *working* Will of the hidden Deity, which willed to ſee itſelf in this opened, outward Shew of all the poſſible Powers of Life and Glory; and from whence new Worlds of finite Divine Beings, as ſo many living Images of God, might have a Poſſibility of coming forth. For without Nature, God muſt be by himſelf, and continue an unmanifeſted God. For no *Form* or Creature can be, unleſs there be ſomething antecedent to it, that can be *formed*. *Life* muſt be, before there can be any finite living Creatures; juſt as *Light* muſt be, before there can be any *ſeeing* Eyes. And therefore the

Manifestation of God in an outward Glory of all the possible Powers, Qualities, Perfections of Life, called eternal Nature, must be, or there could be no Possibility for the Existence of any Creature.

Now this same working Will of the Triune Deity, which manifested itself in an eternal Nature, manifesteth itself in creaturely Forms, all generated from, all enlivened and animated with, that same Trinity of Fire, Light, and Spirit, that constitutes eternal Nature. So that all intelligent Creatures are that in their finite Being, which eternal Nature is in its infinite State. And thus all of them are from God, and from Heaven, live in God, and may work with God, as God is in Heaven, and Heaven in him; one Life, one Power, one Will, and one Happiness with God.

Now every thing that is not God, but after him, and distinct from him, must be that which it is, from the working Will of the Deity. For since it cometh into Being, only because it is *willed* to be, it can have nothing in it, or be any other Thing, but that which the working or creating Will brought forth. And as all Things began in and from this working Will; so all Things must go on in it; and there can be no other Creator, Worker, or Former of Things to all Eternity,

but the working Will of God, either mediately or immediately. Nor can there be any other Nature in any thing, but that which is the Birth, or magic Effect, of a working Will within it. And every thing that is done by the Creature, every thing which it ſeeks and likes, or abhors and reſiſts, is all driven on by a working Will, or magic Power, which ſtirs, and generates, and works within it.

Would you know now the true Ground of all this? It is this: It is becauſe *Will* is the firſt Original of all Power, and the Omnipotence of God conſiſteth in nothing elſe but his *working Will*; and therefore no Power ever was, or ever can be, any-where elſe, but as it is in God, and if the Creature hath any Power, it muſt have it, as God hath it, in the working Will. For ſince all Nature, with all its Qualities, Births, and Creatures, are all brought into Being by the working Will of God; it evidently follows, that every Creature, with every Quality, Power, and Property in it, is magically born, and therefore muſt have a magic Nature, that is, a Nature that cometh from, and ſtandeth in, a working Will.

And now, Sir, you are come into a full View of the moſt important Matter of the

Myſtery

Myſtery of all Things; a Matter which, if rightly apprehended in the inward Ground of your Soul, puts an entire End to all the Jargon of a falſe Philoſophy, and to all thoſe Fictions of Doctrines and Diſputes, which Reaſon has built upon the written Word of God.

For nothing is effected by Fiction and Invention, by any contrived Arts or Searchings of rational Inquiries; all this is nothing, becauſe it toucheth not Nature, but leaveth it to itſelf; which carrieth on its own Works by its own Power, and can only work in its own Way; and muſt bring forth its own Births independent of every thing but its own working Life. But all lieth in the Will and working Deſire of the Soul, becauſe *Will* began and brought forth all that Nature that lives in the Soul, and is the only Life in it; and this Life can work and grow from nothing elſe, but that which firſt brought it forth. Hence you ſee the full Meaning of theſe Words of our Author, *All is magical, and that Magic is the Mother of all Things*, and, conſequently, the only Opener of all divine Knowlege. All which Expreſſions only imply thus much, that the *Will*, whether in God, or the Creature, is the Ground and Seed of every Thing; is the

generating working Power, which maketh and worketh all Things to be in that State and Condition which they are; and that every Thing begins, goes on, and ends, in the Working of the Will; and that nothing can be otherwiſe, than as its Will worketh; and therefore Eternity and Time is magical; and Magic is, and muſt be, the Mother of all Things.

Now here you ſee, in the utmoſt Degree of Clearneſs, how all true and falſe Religion divide from one another. For if nothing worketh but the Will, if nothing elſe carries on the Work of Nature; then all is falſe and vain in Religion but the Working of the Will; and nothing is ſaving, or redeeming the Life of the Soul, but that which helps the Will to work towards God.

Hence it is, that our Author ſo often tells his Reader, that when he ſees and finds this magic Birth of Things, he is *delivered from Babel*; not by running from one Place to another, or from one Syſtem of Opinions to another, but by *inwardly leaving* all the Workings of earthly Self, all the Paper-Buildings of natural Reaſon, and turning to God with the whole Will and working Deſire of his Heart. This is the right coming out of our own *Babel* of vain Opinions into the

Truth

Truth and Reality of Nature, where the living God of Nature is found; not in Notions, but in the living Working of the Soul, and worshiped in Spirit and in Truth.

I said, into the *Truth and Reality of Nature*, because Nature is the Standard of Truth, and all is *Babel* but that which worketh with Nature, that is, with eternal Nature; for as eternal Nature is the Manifestation of the unchangeable God, so it must be as unchangeable in itself, and its own Workings, as God is; because it hath nothing in it, but what is in and from the unchangeable God. And therefore, God cannot be manifest, or work in any Creature, but as he is manifest, and worketh in eternal Nature; and therefore all that the Creature doth is Labour lost, and a vain Beating of the Air, but that which it worketh with, and according to eternal Nature. Because God never was, nor ever can be, or be found, any-where else but in his own Heaven, or eternal Nature. And no Soul can by any one possible thing find, or be found by God, but by standing before him in the same Will and Working as eternal Nature doth. And therefore all is Fiction and *Babel* but the Working of the Will, because nothing but the Will can work with Nature; and that

for this Reaſon, becauſe all Life, and all Nature, eternal and temporal, is what it is, merely and ſolely, from the Working of the Will. All things in Heaven and in Earth ſtand in this magic Birth; and nothing can change its State, either for better or worſe, but as the Working of its Will changes. Juſtly therefore is it ſaid, that where this Truth is found, there is a full and true Deliverance from *Babel*; that is, from all Strife, and Zeal, and Diviſion about Opinions, Sects, and Churches; ſince the *one Thing* that works either to Life, or to Death, the one Thing that alone opens Heaven or Hell for us, is with every *individual Man* in every Place, and in every Age of the World; and that one Thing is the *Working of the Will.* And when, in any ſuch Man, his Will is turned from his own earthly Self, and this earthly Life, and worketh with its Deſire to God, then all theſe Sayings of the Scripture are true of him; *viz. That he is redeemed from this evil World—that he has his Converſation in Heaven—that he is of God, and heareth God's Word—that he is ſaved by Faith—that Chriſt is revealed in him—that he is Chriſt's, and Chriſt is his—that Chriſt is in him of a Truth—and that he is led by the Spirit of Chriſt.* All theſe Texts would

be true of him, though he had never ſeen, nor heard, a Syllable of the written Word of God.

For the *Word* of God which ſaveth and redeemeth, which giveth Life and Light to the Soul, is not the Word printed on Paper, but is that eternal, *ever-ſpeaking Word*, which is the Son of God, who in the Beginning was with God, and was the God by whom all Things were made. This is the univerſal Teacher and Enlightener of all that are in Heaven, and on Earth, who from the Beginning to the End of Time, without Reſpect of Perſons, ſtands at the Door of every Heart of Man, ſpeaking into it not human Words, but *divine Goodneſs*; calling and knocking, not with outward Sounds, but by the *inward Stirring* of an awakened Divine Life. And therefore, as ſure as that is true, which St. *John* ſaith, That this eternal Word *is the Life of Men, and the Light that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, ſo ſure is it, that our Saviour and Salvation, our Teacher and Enlightener, from whom we have every good Thought, is *Chriſt within us*; not within this or that Man, but in every Man where-ever born, and in whom the Light of Life ariſeth. And indeed how can it be otherwiſe? For if God is

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the God of all Men; and the *Word* of God the Life and Light of all Men; and all Men are capable of Goodneſs; and all Goodneſs can only be from God; and no Goodneſs can belong to Man, but that which is *within* him; then every Man muſt have the *Word*, or *Chriſt* of God within him, and can have it no-where elſe. All Teachers therefore, who teach Men to look for Life or Salvation in any thing but from the *Word* and Spirit of God within them, ſtand chargeable with the Blood and Death of Souls; becauſe, in all the Poſſibility of Things, nothing can overcome that Death which is in the Soul, but the *Word*, or *Chriſt* of God living and working in it. For, obſerve, Man muſt have Goodneſs in the ſame Way as God hath Goodneſs, that is, from the Divine Nature; for Goodneſs is no where elſe, neither is any thing elſe capable of it; and therefore, if Goodneſs is to be in Man, the Divine Nature muſt, of all Neceſſity, be firſt brought to Life *within him*. But this cannot be, till the working Will of our Heart turns and gives up itſelf wholly to the Word and Spirit of God *within us*. For we can have nothing but that, towards which the Earneſtneſs of our Will goeth.

Again,

Again, ſee here in a ſtill higher Degree of Proof the abſolute Neceſſity, and unſpeakable Benefit, of the *Spirit of Prayer*; how it does, and muſt, in ſpite of all Oppoſition, raiſe the fallen Soul out of the Poverty of Fleſh and Blood, into the Riches of an heavenly Nature brought forth in it. For ſince all Things in Heaven and Earth ſtand in a magic Birth, or Working of the Will; the Will is that, which hath all Power; it unites all that is united in Heaven or on Earth; it divides and ſeparates all that is divided in Nature; it makes Heaven, and it makes Hell; for there is no Hell, but where the Will of the Creature is turned from God; nor any Heaven, but where the Will of the Creature worketh with God. Therefore, as we pray, ſo we are; and as our Will-Spirit ſecretly worketh, ſo are we either ſwallowed up in the Vanity of Time, or called forth into the Riches of Eternity. And therefore the Spirit of Prayer is moſt juſtly conceived, and moſt ſimply expreſſed, when it is ſaid to be the Riſing of the Soul out of the Vanity of Time into the Riches of Eternity: For all the Vanity which the Soul hath, is from its living in, and loving the Things of Time; and therefore it can only come out of the Vanity of its State, by loving and living in

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the Truths, which are the Riches of Eternity: For the Spirit of Prayer is the Hunger of the Soul; and as every Hunger is, so it eats; it always eateth that which it hungereth after, and hath a Life suitable to the Nature, State, and Condition, both of its Hunger, and its Food. If it hungereth after the Things of Flesh and Blood, it eateth nothing else, and only groweth in the bestial Life; and of the Flesh must reap the Corruption that belongs to Flesh: And if it hungereth after God, it eateth the Food which giveth Life to the Angels; it eateth the Bread that is come down from Heaven; namely, the real heavenly Body and Blood of *Christ*, which surely may be called the Riches of Eternity.

All the Mysteries of Religion, and the Necessity of the whole Process of *Christ* in our Redemption, have all of them their Ground, and Necessity, and Efficacy, in this *magic Nature* of Things, and are all of them only for this one End; to help fallen Man to have a *working Will* towards that first Life, which he has lost. And therefore no one joins with the Mysteries of Redemption, or can have any Share in them, but he whose Will turns wholly from this World, and hath all its Workings towards God and

Heaven.

Heaven. And now, Sir, you ſee the plain, and eaſy, and certain Deliverance from all Perplexity and vain Labour in the Diſputes and Diviſions of Religion. It is but opening your natural Eyes, that is, letting ſimple Nature work with its own Power, and all Difficulties are removed; and the Way to God and Goodneſs is as natural, and as free from all Perplexity, as the opening our Eyes to ſee the Light of the Sun. For what is ſo natural to Man as the Working of the Will? And yet he can have nothing, or be any thing, different from that, to which his Will worketh.

Nor does this at all too much exalt the human Will, or make our Salvation not to be the *pure Grace and Gift* of God to us, but quite the contrary. For the Will here ſpoken of, is not the Will of Fleſh and Blood, but that heavenly Will, which is the only Spark of the Deity in us, given by the free Grace of God to all Mankind, as ſoon as fallen, and called in Scripture the *inſpoken* Word of God in Paradiſe; which was the Beginning of the Redemption, when God firſt entered into a Covenant of Salvation with *Adam*, and all his Poſterity. This *inſpoken Word* is *Chriſt*, or the Spark of the Divine Nature, which is the Light that lighteth

lighteth every Man that cometh into the World. And here, in this *Chriſt in us*, lieth the *Will* that hath the *Power* of Salvation in it; and all its Salvation is the Salvation of *Chriſt*. For it is the Will of this heavenly Nature, hid in every Man, that is the working Will, that bringeth forth the New Birth of Heaven in us; and therefore is the *pure free* Salvation of *Chriſt*, given to be a Redeemer within us. So that all our Salvation, though wrought out by this working Will within us, is, from the Beginning to the End, the pure Grace of God to us, and no Salvation of our own.

And thus, Sir, you ſee, that every Soul of Man is partly human, and partly divine; and is united to an earthly and an heavenly Nature; and ſo not only can, but muſt, always work either with one or the other, and has nothing elſe to work with; and muſt and can be, or have nothing elſe, but as he followeth or worketh with either of theſe Wills. So that, infallibly to know both your preſent and future State, what you are, and to what you belong, you need only to ſee, what you cannot help ſeeing, *how*, and *where*, and to *what*, your Will worketh.

And thus, from this Knowlege of the magic Nature of Things, which all are that

which

which they are, ſolely from the Working of the Will in every thing, you are delivered from all vain Labour and Party-Zeal; and are brought back to that true and ſafe Ground, on which God has placed you to work out your own Salvation, without any Hindrance from any Builders of *Babel*, of whatever Denomination.

The Short is this: The whole Matter of Religion relates only to *Life and Death*. But Life and Death are both of them immutable, and founded in the unchangeable Nature of Things. Nothing can alter them, or invent a new Way, either to or from either of them. To what purpoſe then, is all this dividing into ſo many Parties? Why all this Strife and Zeal about Opinions? Death and Life go on their own Way, carry on their own Work, and ſtay for no Opinions. Does the *Stone* ſtop, or alter its Tendency towards the Earth? Do the Sparks and Flame ceaſe to fly upwards, becauſe Philoſophers diſpute and quarrel about the Reaſons of one or the other? No; Nature goes on in its own Way, let Reaſon ſay what it will. Now *Death* and *Life* have their own unchangeable Nature and Working in and from themſelves; and are juſt as diſtinct from, and independent of, all Opinions of Men about them,

as

as the Things just now mentioned: So that to will and work, as *Life* willeth and worketh, and to will and work, as *Death* willeth and worketh, is the one only possible Way to partake either of Life or Death. What a Delusion is it therefore, to grow grey-headed in balancing antient and modern Opinions; to waste the precious uncertain Fire of Life in critical Zeal, and verbal Animosities; when nothing but the kindling of our working Will into a Faith, that overcometh the World, into a stedfast Hope, and ever-burning Love, and Desire of the Divine Life, can hinder us from falling into eternal Death!

Academicus. Oh! *Theophilus*, you have led me into a Depth, that I never thought of seeing into.

For this magic Power of every thing, that works in all Nature and Creature, shews me every thing in a new View. You might well say, that Reason has no Power in this Mystery; that nothing is proposed to it: For since Life and Death have their own Working within themselves, and must at last, when Time is at an End, divide and take Possession of every thing, according as its Will has worked either with one or the other, it signifies no more to them what Reason has been

been all this time discoursing about, than in what Language a Man used to talk. But before you go any farther, I beg a Word or Two on these Matters. *First*, How I am to understand our Author, when he says, *Here the Reader must have magical Eyes*; and, *This or that hath a magical Understanding*. And, *Secondly*, That you would, as you promised, shew, how the speaking thus of this magical Power of Life, is strictly conformable to the Spirit of the Gospel.

Theophilus. As to your First Matter, concerning *magical Eyes*; I should have thought the Thing plain enough already. But you may understand it thus. When a *Carpenter* cuts Timber into various Shapes and Forms, and then joins one Piece to another, till it is formed into the Shape of a House; this is no magical Work, because one Part does not grow from the other, till the Whole is brought forth, and therefore there is no need of magical Eyes to see what this Work is. But when an Oak groweth from an Acorn, or a Plant from a Seed in the Ground, here the Work is magical; that is, it is a Birth or Product generated from the working Will in the Acorn and Seed, from whence the Stem, and all its Branches and Fruits, grow forth; which working Will continueth, till the

Plant or Tree hath reached its Limit, that is, till the working Will in the Seed hath ſpent itſelf. Now all this is a magical Work, and therefore can only be ſeen by ſuch magical Eyes as can ſee into the Beginning, and go on with the Working of that which works and generates in the Tree or Plant.

As to your other Matter, How this Language of the magical Working of the Will, is *entirely conformable to the Spirit of the Goſpel*; the Anſwer is eaſy, becauſe the Thing is plain. For the firſt poſſible Beginning of the Chriſtian Life, is, by the Founder of it, expreſsly laid in a *New Birth* from above, and therefore plainly declared to be a magical Work; and to have no other Nature; becauſe a generating Work, and a magical Work, are only different Expreſſions for the ſame Thing. And as the Beginning, ſo every following Advancement in the Chriſtian Life, is as really and truly only a Growth of Life, or magical Birth from the Powers of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, upon the working Will in the Soul, as the Plant, from its firſt Stirring in the Seed, to its laſt State, is only a Growth from the Powers of the Sun, Stars, and Elements, upon the working Will in the Seed.

Every

Every thing that is outward in Religion, whether it be *Men* or *Things*, *planting* or *watering*, is only for the ſake of this inward Birth; either to direct Man to it, to help him to work in it, or warn him of that eternal Death, which the Will, working according to Fleſh and Blood, muſt inherit as its own genuine Fruit. And whoever fancies the Chriſtian Life to be any thing elſe than a Birth growing up in God, till it comes to the Perfection of the Divine Life, by the ſame Way of a gradual Growth, and in the ſame Reality as the finiſhed Flower has all its Perfection by way of a gradual Growth from the Seed, has not a Syllable in the Goſpel, nor an Inſtance in Nature, to plead in Excuſe of his fanciful Error.

For nothing worketh in all Nature or Grace, but what worketh as a Birth, or magical Growth of Life. For nothing can come from the living God but Life, nor for any other End, but to manifeſt ſome Kind or Degree of Life. There are no dead Forms, or lifeleſs Inventions to be found, till you come to the mechanic Works of Mens Hands, and the cobweb Schemes of dead Knowlege, brought forth by human Reaſon. For Reaſon is the old Serpent called Subtlety, the firſt and the laſt grand Deceiver of Man-

kind, that takes them from the powerful Workings of Nature, to follow the Shadows of empty Sounds, till all is ſwallowed up either by final Life or Death, which will at laſt reap every thing into its own unchangeable Barn.

Again, *Faith* and *Hope*, and *Love* and *Deſire* towards God, are the only Goſpel Means of bringing forth the New Birth; and therefore all that the Goſpel requires, is a magical Working of the Will.

For all theſe Powers, whether of Faith, Hope, Love, and Deſire towards God and the Divine Life, are only ſo many different Powers of the Working of the Will, and have all their Efficacy, as ſo many Parts of it; and only alter, raiſe, and bring forth a New Life, becauſe the Working of the Will is magical, and generates as it works, and unites with that which it willeth. And thus *Chriſt*, or the New Man in *Chriſt Jeſus*, is formed in us, from a Seed of Heaven, which is the Will that can work towards God, till it becomes a godly Birth, as the Seed works towards the Sun, till it is changed into the Birth of a beauteous fragrant Flower.

Again, Hence it is, namely, from this magic Power of the Working of the Will, that

that our bleſſed Lord ſpeaks ſo often of the Omnipotence of Faith; *viz. That all things are poſſible to him that believeth—Whatſoever ye ſhall ask in Prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive——If ye had Faith but as a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay to this Tree, Be thou plucked up by the Root; and to this Mountain, Be thou caſt into the Sea; and it ſhould be done——Thy Faith hath ſaved thee ——According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto thee.*

Hence all theſe Truths plainly follow: *Firſt*, That *Faith*, which is in itſelf only the Working of the Will, is the Source of all Power; and that all that is done in Nature is done by it alone; and that therefore all Nature ſtandeth in a magic Working of the Will. For *all Things could not be poſſible to him that believeth*, but becauſe Faith, or the Working of the Will, is the true Source of all Power in or over Nature. *Secondly*, Here is a full Demonſtration of the high and powerful State, in which Man was at firſt created! A Lord over all this outward World; who could, by the Working of his Will, command the Obedience of all Things about him.

This was the Dominion he had over all the Creatures on the Earth, in the Sea, and

in the Air; not such a poor Power as invented Weapons, or the Strength of his Hands and Feet, could help him to; but a Power here mentioned, of standing still, and, by the Faith or Will of his Mind, making every Creature to come or go, just as the faithful Disciple of *Christ* was, by his Faith, to have Power over every outward Thing of this World.

Now all this high State of his first Power is undeniable from the Words of our Saviour. For it is not to be supposed, that he would turn Mens Thoughts to any such Powers, as to have *all Things obedient to their Faith*, or the working Will of their Minds, if this had not been Man's first created State, or such Powers as did then belong to it. For no Man or Creature can have any higher Power, than that which belongs to his first created State.

And therefore all Gospel Faith, however wonderful in its Power, can only have *somewhat* of that first powerful Faith, which Man had when he first came out of the Hands of God. And Faith *now* in a Redeemer can only be the Means of obtaining Salvation, for this Reason; because Faith was *then* that original high Power in Man, which could have preserved him in his first

Perfection

Perfection and Glory of Life. Thus, when *Chriſt* ſaith, *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee*, it is the ſame thing as if he had ſaid, Faith had always ſuch Power; that Faith was the *Strength* and *Glory* of the Firſt Man, that could have ſaved him from falling under the Power of the Stars and Elements; that it was Faith alone which could and did put an End to his firſt paradiſical Glory, by turning its Strength and Deſire into the Life of this World. *Again*, When our Lord ſaith, *According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto thee*; this was no new Thing, or new Operation in the Power of Faith, but was only a Declaration of a Truth as old as Nature and Creature, and was in Reality ſo much ſaid of the powerful Faith of the Firſt Man; and infallibly ſhews, that as *now*, ſo *then*, nothing was done to him in his Fall, but that which was done according to the Faith and Working of his Will. For this is God's immutable righteous Procedure with Man, that nothing but his own Works can follow him; and that, from firſt to laſt, whether ſtanding or falling, according to his Faith, and working Will, ſo muſt it be done unto him. And therefore Man's Faith, and working Will, was his divine Power of living ſuperior to, and independent of all the Stars

and Elements of this World, in his own angelic Perfection of a Divine Life.

For if the Revival of Faith, in so small a Degree, as to be compared to a Grain of Mustard-seed, could bring forth in Man such a Divine Power over all the Things of this World, is it not a sufficient Proof of the high Power of his first lost Faith; which only thus coming again, as the smallest of Seeds, yet comes with such mighty Power over all outward Nature, the Flesh and the Devil? And thus, all that is said in the Gospel, of the Power of Faith, is, in the strictest Truth, so much said of the Power and Perfection of our first Father, over whom this earthly System had no Power: But whether he stood, or fell, or was to rise again, all was, and is, and must be done, by his Faith, or the Working of his Will.

And thus also, you see, that all that was said of the Nature and Extent of the *magic Power* of the Will, is not only conformable to, but is the *very Spirit* of the Gospel, and all the written Word of God. For from the first Promise made to *Adam*, to the last written Words of Scripture, Man is only called and directed to the true Exercise of these *magic*, *generating* Powers of the Will; namely, to *believe*, to *hope*, to *trust* in God; to *love*, *desire*,

ſire, and *expect* the Renewal of a Divine Life from the Goodneſs of God.

Humanus. Give me leave only to add, that in theſe Words of our Saviour, *According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto thee*, and other ſuch-like Sayings, he has not only opened the true Nature and Power of Faith, but has diſcovered more of the true Philoſophy of Nature, than ever was told the World before. Faith is generally conſidered as a ſpeculative Thing, as an Aſſent of the Mind to the Credibility of Things related. This may ſometimes, as well in the Scriptures, as in other Books, be called Faith, as the ſame Word may be uſed in various Senſes. But the Faith in Queſtion, about which our Saviour ſpeaks, and to which he aſcribes ſo much Power, and which alone can do a Man any real Good or Harm, is quite of another Nature: I ſay, Good or Harm; becauſe all that is good or bad proceeds from it, and it carries its Power which way it will: As it can work all Wonders, and overcome the World; ſo it alone has Power over Life and Heaven in the Soul, can drive them out, and ſet up the Kingdom of Hell and Death inſtead of them.

Now this Faith may be thus underſtood; it is that *Power by which a Man gives himſelf up to any thing, ſeeks, wills, adheres to, and unites with it, ſo that his Life lives in it,*

and

and belongs to it. Now to whatever the Soul gives itself up; whatever it hungereth after; and in which it delights, and seeks to be united, there, and there only, is *its Faith*; that Faith which can work either Life or Death, and according to which Faith every thing is, and must be done to Man.

Now this Faith is not a Matter of Choice, so that a Man may live without it, if he pleases; but is essential to his Life, and altogether inseparable from it. For whatever the Life drives at, to whatever it is given up, there is its *living* and *powerful* Faith. Therefore, be a Man given up to what he will, seeking, delighting, and acquiescing in whatever it be, temporal or eternal, whether it be Christianity, Idolatry, Deism, or Atheism; this is a certain Conclusion, that every Man in the World is a Man of Faith, lives by Faith, and that equally so; because every Man's Life is equally given up to the seeking, and delighting in, and uniting itself to, something or other; and therefore every Man equally lives by Faith, and that in its highest Degree. It matters not, whether a Man delights and acquiesces in the Philosophy of *Epicurus*, or *Spinoza*; whether he be *given up* to Luxury and Sensuality, or to Syllogisms and Definitions, to Mysteries of Redemption, or Mysteries

ries of Atheiſm; He is neither more nor leſs a Man of Faith for all this; but is equally under the Power of Faith, whether it be divine, earthly, ſenſual, or deviliſh. For which way ſoever the Life of Man tends, or drives; to whatever he gives up himſelf; there he is, and lives by Faith, and that in its higheſt Degree; for no Faith can riſe higher than this. Nor can a Man's Faith be any-where, but where his Life is, and to which it belongs; nor can he be ſaid to live to any thing, but by Faith. For Faith is as much the one working Power of Life, as Thought is the one working Power of the Underſtanding; and the Underſtanding of Man may as eaſily proceed without being led by Thought, as the Life of Man go on without being led by *Faith*; that is, without *giving itſelf up to ſomething*, or other, with which it would be united, and to which it would belong, as its deſired Good; which, as I ſaid before, is the higheſt Degree of the moſt living Faith.

The Debate therefore, ſet up by the Deiſts, about *Reaſon* and *Faith*, as two Principles of Life; the one appropriated to Chriſtians, and the other to themſelves, is founded on the groſſeſt Ignorance of both their Natures; as great as that of ſuppoſing, that there are two Principles of ſeeing and ſmelling; *viz. Reaſon*

ſon and the *Senſes*. And the Deiſt, who turns from all Faith, to have a Life of Reaſon, proceeds as much according to Nature, as if he was to leave it to Chriſtians, to ſee and ſmell by their Senſes; but himſelf and Brethren to ſee and ſmell by the Power of Reaſon. For Reaſon is no more the Power of Life, than it is the Power of the Senſes; it can no more enter into, mix, or co-operate with *Life*, than with the Senſes; but muſt ſtand below them both, and follow them both, in the ſame Degree of Inability to alter, increaſe, or leſſen the natural Power of either of them, as the Eye hath to alter the Vegetation, or Colour, or Smell, of the Plant on which it looks. For Reaſon like the Eye, is only an outward Looker on; and can no more form, or model, or alter the Life of the Soul, than it can alter the Life and Vegetation of the Body. But this Saying, *According to thy Faith, ſo be it done unto thee*, contains the unchangeable Ground, and true Philoſophy of *Life*, and the Power of Life. And this Saying takes in every Individual of human Nature; and the Deiſt may as well think of turning Death over to the Chriſtians, and reſerving Immortality for himſelf, as to think of being any thing elſe, either here or hereafter, but purely and ſolely that, which his Faith has brought to paſs in him.

him. He may, indeed, eaſily enough keep himſelf free from all Chriſtian Faith; but, whether he will or no, a Faith muſt do all in him, and for him, juſt in the ſame Degree, as it does for the Chriſtian. Let him make ever ſo many Declarations againſt the Superſtition and Blindneſs of Faith; ever ſo many Encomiums upon the Beauty of Axioms, Syllogiſms, and Deductions of Reaſon; his Life is juſt as far from being a Life of Reaſon, as the Chriſtian's is, who declares only for a Life of Faith. For as the *Eye* and the *Noſe* have juſt the ſame Nature, Office, and Power, in a Man, whether he be Deiſt, or Chriſtian; and he cannot, as ſuch, have either more or leſs from them, or be more or leſs helped by them; ſo Reaſon and Faith have juſt the ſame Nature, Office, and Power, in a Man, and are always in him, and will always do the ſame for him, whether he be Chriſtian or Deiſt. And was the Deiſt to change Sides, he would be neither more nor leſs a Man of Faith and Reaſon, than he was before; nor have got or loſt any Power either of Faith or Reaſon. He would only be under a divine, inſtead of an earthly and ſenſual Faith; and his Reaſon would not have changed its State, or Office, or Power, but

only

only be the Servant of a better Master; that is, of a Divine Faith.

Now, was not Faith the Power of Life in *every* Man, no Man could live by Faith, nor could it be the Principle or Power of Life in *any* Man. But seeing every Man, whether earthly or heavenly, is that which he is, by Faith; and Faith will and must have its Work in every Man; and he cannot live without it, or free from it; hence is the absolute Necessity of the *one right* Faith, in order to Salvation, and the Impossibility of any thing else to avail in the stead of it. Thence also it is, that Christianity applies not to the Reason of any Man, because Reason is not the Principle of Life, or the Former of it; but it calls the Heart to a right Faith, because Man is only lost and separate from God and Heaven by his Faith in the Things and Powers of this World. And therefore all Salvation does, and only can, arise from a Faith turned to God; and also all Damnation from Faith in the Things of this World. And no Man can turn either to God, or to this World, but by Faith; that is, by giving up himself either to the one, or the other; which is the *highest* Act or Power of Faith. For there is nothing that works either to Life or Death, in any Man, but *that* to which he is given up, by

by *Faith* in it. And Reaſon never had, nor ever can have, or do, any thing elſe, but one and the ſame *Under-work*, or Office, let Faith take which way it will.

The Deluſion of the Deiſt lies here: He refuſes an Aſſent to the *Hiſtory of Facts and Doctrines* of the Goſpel; and this is *his Proof* to himſelf, that he lives by Reaſon, and that it is the real Principle of his Life. On the other hand, he that aſſents to the Hiſtory of Facts and Doctrines of the Goſpel, is, by the Deiſt, reckoned to be a Man of Goſpel Faith, and that lives by it. But this is all Miſtake on both Sides. For this Aſſent on one Side, and Diſſent on the other, touches not the Matter either of Reaſon or Faith. For both theſe Perſons, notwithſtanding this Difference of aſſenting, may not only be equally governed by Faith; but have ſtrictly one and the ſame Faith. For if the Things of this World have the Heart of both of them, which very eaſily may be; then they have but *one* and the ſame Faith, and are equally governed by it; for they both equally *live by a Faith* in this World.

The Deiſt therefore hath no other poſſible way of ſhewing, that he is not as much a Man of Faith, as any Chriſtian can be, but by ſhewing, that he has no Will, no Deſire, no

Inclination of Heart left in him; that his Life drives no way, is given up to no one thing, as its End and Good; but that Reason, without *Affection*, carries him only from Syllogism to Syllogism, in Quest of nothing. Then it is, that he may deem himself to be a Man of Reason, but not till then; for if he has any Heart that hath any Inclination to be *united with, or belong to any thing*; then he becomes a Man of Faith, and he lives by Faith in that to which he is given up, as much as any Christian does, who is given up to the Mysteries of Christian Redemption.

I could not help saying thus much on this Delusion, in which I have been so long ensnared myself, and therefore have the utmost good Will and Earnestness to help others out of it. And, to this End, I shall add the following Passages, taken from a Book, where this whole Matter is justly said to be examined to the Bottom. "We have no Want of "Religion, but *so far* as we want to *better* "*our State* in God; or so far as we are *un-* "*possessed* of God, or less possessed of him "than we might be, and our Nature requires. "This is the true and only Ground of Reli- "gion; *viz.* to alter our State of Existence "*in God*, and to have more of the Divine "Nature and Perfections communicated to

"us.

" us. Nothing therefore is our *Good* in Re-
" ligion, but *that* which *alters* our State of
" Exiſtence in God for the better, and puts us
" in Poſſeſſion of *ſomething* of God; or makes
" us Partakers of the Divine Nature in ſuch
" a Manner and Degree, as we wanted it.
" Every thing that is in Life, has its Degree
" of Life in and from God; it lives and
" moves and has its Being in God. This is
" as true of Devils, as of the higheſt and moſt
" perfect Angels. Therefore, all the Happi-
" neſs or Miſery of all Creatures conſiſts on-
" ly in this; *viz.* as they are *more* or *leſs*
" poſſeſſed of God, or as they differently par-
" take of the Divine Nature, or according to
" their *different State* of Exiſtence in God.
" But if this be a Truth (and who can deny
" it?) then we have the Certainty of Demon-
" ſtration, that nothing can be *our Good* in
" Religion, but that which *communicates* to
" us *ſomething* of God, or the Divine Nature,
" or that which *betters* our State and Man-
" ner of Exiſtence in God.

" For if Devils are what they are, becauſe
" of their State and Manner of *Exiſtence in*
" *God*; if bleſſed Angels are what they are,
" becauſe of their State, and Manner of Ex-
" iſtence in God; then it undeniably follows,
" that all that is betwixt Angels and Devils,

" all Beings, from the Happineſs of the one,
" to the Miſery of the other, muſt and can
" have no other Happineſs or Miſery, but ac-
" cording to their *State* and Manner of Ex-
" iſtence in God, or according as they have
" more or leſs of the State of Angels, or the
" State of Devils, in them. Therefore no-
" thing can be our *Good* in Religion, but that
" which *alters* our State and Manner of Ex-
" iſtence in God, and renders us poſſeſſed of
" him in a different and better Manner.

" Now, if you was to ſend to the fallen
" Spirits of Darkneſs all the Syſtems of your
" *Religion of Reaſon*, that have been publiſhed,
" to let them know that they have the Power
" of their own Reſtoration and Happineſs
" within themſelves; that they need ſeek to
" nothing, but their own natural Reaſon and
" Underſtanding, and the Strength and Acti-
" vity of their own Powers, to raiſe them to
" all the Happineſs they are capable of; ſuch
" a Religion would be ſo far from altering or
" mending their State of Exiſtence in God, or
" doing them any Good, that it would add
" Strength to all their Chains; and the more
" firmly they believed and relied upon it, the
" more would they be confirmed and fixed
" in their Separation from God. And yet,
" a Religion that muſt neceſſarily keep them

" in

" in Hell, is the *only Religion*, that you will " have to carry you to Heaven. May God " deliver you from this Error!

" Hence it ſufficiently appears, that your " Way of *natural Reaſon* cannot be the Way " of Salvation; becauſe the Want of Salva- " tion is nothing elſe, but the wanting to " have *our State and Manner of Exiſtence in* " *God altered for the better*, or to have *ſome-* " *thing* of God communicated to us, which " we *want*, and are capable of receiving. But " if this is, and muſt be, the Nature of Sal- " vation; then no Religion can *ſave* us, or " do us our proper Good, or ſupply our pro- " per Want, but that which has Power to " *alter* our State of Exiſtence in God, or to " *communicate* to us that of God, which we " want, and are capable of. And therefore, " nothing but that ſame Power of God, which " created us, which gave us our State and " Manner of Exiſtence in God, and commu- " nicated to us that which we poſſeſs in " him, can redeem us, or help us to that State " and Manner of Exiſtence in him, which " we have loſt, and are in Want of.

" There never could have been any Diſ- " pute about the Poſſibility of ſaving our- " ſelves by our own natural Faculties, had " not Men loſt all true Knowlege both of

" God and themſelves. For this Diſpute " cannot happen, till Men ſuppoſe God to " be ſome *outward Being*; that our Relation " to him is ſome *outward Relation*; that " Religion is an *outward Thing*, that paſſes " between God and us, like Terms of Beha- " viour between Man and Man; that Sin " hurts, and ſeparates us from God, only as a " Miſdemeanour hurts, and ſeparates us from " our Prince; that an offended God either " gives or refuſes Pardon to us, as an angry " Prince does to his Subjects; and that, what " he gives or forgives to us, is ſomething as " diſtinct or different from himſelf, as when " a Prince, ſitting upon his Throne, gives or " forgives ſomething to an Offender, that is " an hundred Miles from him.

" Now all this is the ſame total Ignorance " of God, what he is in himſelf, and what " he is in relation to us, and the Manner of " of his being *our Good*, as when the old Idola- " ters took Men to be Gods. And yet no- " thing is more plain, than that your Religion " of Reaſon is *wholly founded* upon all theſe " groſs and falſe Notions of God. You " have not an Argument in its Defence, but " what ſuppoſes, that our Relation to God " is an *outward Relation*, like that of Sub- " jects to their Prince; and that what we do

" to

" to and for God, as our Service to him, is,
" and must be done, by our own Power, as
" that which we do to and for our Prince,
" must be done by our own Power. And
" from these Errors it is, that you draw this
" false Conclusion, that if our own Reason
" and natural Power were not sufficient to
" obtain for us all that we want, and God re-
" quires of us; God must be less good than
" a good earthly Prince, who requires no
" more of us, than that which we have a na-
" tural Strength to do, or can do by our own
" Power. And yet all this is pure Absurdi-
" ty, and has all the Grossness of Idolatry in
" it, as soon as you know, that God is no *out-*
" *ward* or *separate* Being; but that we are
" what we are, have what we have, and do
" that which we can do, because he has
" brought us to this State of Life, Power,
" and Existence in *himself*; because he has
" made us, so far as we are made, Partakers
" or Possessors of a Life *in him*, and has com-
" municated to us, such a Life in himself;
" or in the Words of Scripture, because *in*
" *him we live and move and have our Being*,
" and consequently have no Life, Motion, or
" Being, *out of* him. For from this State of
" our Existence in God, it necessarily follows;
" *First*, That, by the Nature of our Creation,

" we are only put into a Capacity of *receiving*
" Good. A Creature, as such, can be in no
" other State; it is as impossible for him to
" enrich himself, or communicate more Good
" to himself, as it was to create himself. *Se-*
" *condly*, That nothing but God can do us any
" Good. *Thirdly*, That God himself cannot do
" us any Good, but by the Communication of
" himself, in some manner, to us. Hence it is
" plain, that your Religion of Reason, which
" supposes, that we have natural Powers, that
" can put us in Possession of that which we
" want to be possessed of in God; or, that we
" need no more Divine Assistance to recover
" what we have lost of God, than to obtain a
" Pardon from a Prince; or, that God need
" communicate no more of himself to us in
" our Reconcilement to him, than a Prince
" communicates of himself to his pardoned
" Subject; has all the *Mistakes*, *Error*, and
" Ignorance of God, that is in *Idolatry*, when
" it takes God to be something that he is not;
" and has all the false Devotion that is in
" Idolatry, when it puts the same Trust in,
" and expects the same Benefit from, its own
" Powers and Faculties, which Idolaters did
" in and from their Idols. Your Religion of
" Reason, therefore, which you esteem as the
" modern Refinement of the human Mind,

" and

" and more excellent and rational, than the " Faith and Humility of the Gospel, has all " the Dregs of the grossest heathen Idolatry in " it; and has changed nothing in Idolatry, " but the Idol; and only differs in such a " Degree of Philosophy, as the Religion of " worshiping the *Sun* differs from the Re- " ligion of worshiping an *Onion*.

" For as soon as it is known and confessed, " that God is all in all; that in him we live " and move and have our Being; that we " have nothing *separately*, or at a *Distance*, " from him, but every thing in him; that " we have no Degree of Being, nor any De- " gree of Good, but in him; that the Al- " mighty can give us nothing, but that which " is *something* of himself; nor any Degree of " Amendment or Salvation, but in such De- " gree as he communicates *something more* of " himself to us; as soon as this great im- " mutable Truth is known, then it is known " with the utmost Certainty, that to put our " Trust in the *Sun*, or an *Onion*, or our *own* " *Reason*, if not equally absurd, is yet equal- " ly idolatrous, and equally prejudicial to our " Salvation*."

* A Demonstration of the gross and fundamental Errors of a late Book, intituled, *A plain Account of the Sacrament*, &c. p. 161, &c. &c.

And now, *Theophilus*, if you pleaſe, you may proceed in the Matter you was upon.

Theophilus. We have diſcourſed long enough for this time. Let Silence, Recollection, inward and outward Retirement, have their Work for a few Days. They purify the Heart; they weaken and diſarm Self; they ſtrengthen the Spirit of Prayer, and help us not only to pray, but to find, to love, and live in God. Let us all deſire ſuch an Interval as this; and then we ſhall be fitter to meet again for our mutual Benefit. My Friends, adieu.

The End of the Second DIALOGUE.

THE

THIRD DIALOGUE.

Academicus. IF you please, *Theophilus*, pray go on, just where you left off at our last Meeting. For this Mystery seems to be at Day-break with me; and the Approach of its Light leaves me no Power to be content without it.

Theophilus. You have seen, that all Nature begins and stands in a *magic* Birth; and is only a large Display of its working Power in every kind of Creature. You now want to see farther into this Mystery, how eternal Nature begins; and how God, the first, hidden, imperceptible Cause of all After-Things, manifests himself in the Properties of a visible and working Nature. Now I would, to the best of my Power, gladly assist you in this Matter, if I could find out a Way of doing it, by opening in your Heart a Knowlege of God, of Nature, and yourself, without helping you to a *mere Opinion*, or increasing your Thirst after ideal Speculation.

Tell

Tell me, therefore, what you propoſe by the Gratification of this Deſire; or what Effect you expect from ſuch Knowlege, as you here ſeek.

Academicus. All that I deſire by it is, to ſtrengthen and confirm the Ground on which I ſtand; that, ſeeing the true Philoſophy of Religion, I may have nothing to fear from all that Variety of Attacks which now, more than ever, are made upon it by infidel Reaſon. I hope, therefore, it is no vain Curioſity, to deſire to enter into the Depth of this Myſtery, ſince I only deſire thereby Strength to reſiſt all the Enemies of Religion.

Theophilus. All this is right, and very well; provided you do but know who, and what, are the great and powerful Enemies of Religion. But this, perhaps, you do not ſo well apprehend, as you may imagine. Your own Reaſon, born, and bred, and governed, by your own Fleſh and Blood, is the moſt powerful Enemy of Religion that you have to do with, and whom you have the moſt to fear from.

The Men of ſpeculative Reaſon, whom you ſeem moſt to apprehend, are powerleſs Enemies, that cannot ſtrike at your Religion with the Strength of a Straw. Did you but

rightly ſee what their Power is, you would ſee it as ridiculous, as that of a few Water-Engines trying to quench the fiery Globe of the Sun: For Reaſon ſtands in the ſame Inability to touch the Truth of Religion, as the Water-Engine to affect the Sun. Nay, its Inability is much greater; for could the Water, thrown from the Engine, be made to reach the Sun, it would have ſome, though an inſignificant, Effect upon it; but Reaſon can no more affect the Truth of Religion, than *Nothing* can affect *Something*. If Reaſon ſeems to have any Power againſt Religion, it is only where Religion is become a dead Form, has loſt its true State, and is dwindled into Opinion; and when this is the Caſe, that Religion ſtands only as a well-grounded Opinion, then indeed it is always liable to be ſhaken; either by having its own Credibility leſſened, or that of a contrary Opinion increaſed. But when Religion is that which it ſhould be, not a Notion or Opinion, but a *real Life growing up in God*, then Reaſon has juſt as much Power to ſtop its Courſe, as the barking Dog to ſtop the Courſe of the Moon. For true and genuine Religion is *Nature*, is *Life*, and the *Working* of Life; and therefore, where-ever it is, Reaſon has no more Power over it, than over

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the Roots that grow secretly in the Earth, or the Life that is working in the highest Heavens. If therefore you are afraid of Reason hurting your Religion, it is a Sign, that your Religion is not yet as it should be, is not a *self-evident Growth of Nature and Life within you*, but has much of mere Opinion in it.

Observe the Word *self-evident*; for there lies the Truth of the Matter; for you have no more of the Truth of Religion than what is *self-evident* in you. A blind Man may be rich in Notions and Opinions about the Nature, Power, and Good, of Light; and in this Case, one blind Man may perplex another, and unsettle his Notions; but when the Light manifests itself, and is become *self-evident*, then he is at once delivered from all Uncertainty about it. Now Religion is Light and Life; but Light and Life can only manifest themselves, and can nowhere be known, but where they are *self-evident*.

You can know nothing of God, of Nature, of Heaven, or Hell, or yourself, but so far as all these Things are *self-evident* in you. Neither could any of these Things be of any Concern to you, but because they can all of them be *self-evident* in you. For the

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bare Hiſtory, or Hearſay of any one thing, ſignifies no more to you, than the Hearſay of any other thing. And if God and Heaven, Hell and the Devil, the World and the Fleſh, were not all of them *ſelf-evident* in you, you could have no more Good or Hurt from any Hearſay about them, than from the Hearſay of pleaſant Gardens, and diſmal Priſons, in the World of the Moon.

Let it be ſuppoſed, that your ingenious Reaſon ſhould ſuggeſt to you, that there are no Devils or Hell, and therefore no Occaſion to believe that Revelation that gives an Account of *them:* In this Caſe, do but turn to that which is *ſenſible* and *ſelf-evident* in you, and then you muſt know, in the ſame Certainty as you know yourſelf to be alive, that there is *Wrath*, *Self-torment*, *Envy*, *Malice*, *Evil-will*, *Pride*, *Cruelty*, *Revenge*, &c. Now ſay, if you pleaſe, there are no other Devils but theſe, and that Men have no other Devils to reſiſt; and then you will have ſaid Truth enough, have owned Devils enough, and enough confeſſed, that you are in the Midſt of them; that you are every-where tempted by them; and that Fleſh and Blood is too weak to reſiſt them, and therefore wants ſome kind of Saviour, of ſo contrary a Nature,

Nature, as has Power to deſtroy theſe Works of the Devil in you.

Now this is the only Knowlege that you can poſſibly have of an outward Hell, and outward Devils; and this Knowlege is as *ſelf-evident* in you as your own Thoughts, and is as near to you as your own Life. But to ſee and know an outward Hell, or outward Devils, that are outward living Creatures, can never be your own Caſe, till all that is divine and human in you is extinguiſhed; and then you will have Knowlege enough, how Hell is a Place, and how the Devils of Rage, Wrath, Envy, and Pride, *&c.* are living Creatures.

Again, Let it be ſuppoſed, that your ſceptic Reaſon had brought you into Doubt about the Being and Providence of God in you: You have no Occaſion to conſult the Demonſtrations which heathen Philoſophers, School-Divines, Deiſts, or Atheiſts, have produced about it, from the Exiſtence of Things; all concluding, as well Chriſtians, as Deiſts and Atheiſts, that there muſt be ſome eternal firſt Cauſe from which all has proceeded.

For what a God is this, that is only proved to be, becauſe ſomething now is, and therefore ſomething muſt always have been, an infinite,

infinite, eternal Something, with infinite Power to bring forth all that is come into Being? What a God, I say, is this, which the *Arian*, the Deist, and the Atheist, is as willing to own as the Christian; and which is as serviceable to the Cause of *Arianism*, Deism, Idolatry, and Atheism, as it is to Christianity? For the Atheist has his omnipotent, eternal, first Cause, as well as all the Disputers for a God.

But now, if you turn from all these idle Debates and Demonstrations of Reason, to *that* which is *sensible* and *self-evident* in you, then you have a *sensible*, *self-evident* Proof of the true God of Life, and Light, and Love, and Goodness, as manifest to you as your own Life. For with the same self-evident Certainty, as you know that you think, and are alive, you know that there is *Goodness*, *Love*, *Benevolence*, *Meekness*, *Compassion*, *Wisdom*, *Peace*, *Joy*, &c. Now this is the *self-evident* God, that forces himself to be known, and found, and felt, in every Man, in the same Certainty of Self-evidence, as every Man feels and finds his own Thoughts and Life. And this is the God, whose Being and Providence, thus self-evident in us, calls for our Worship, and Love, and Adoration, and Obedience to him: And

this

this Worſhip, and Love, and Adoration, and Conformity to the Divine Goodneſs, is our *true Belief* in, and *ſure Knowlege* of, the ſelf-evident God. And Atheiſm is not the Denial of a firſt omnipotent Cauſe, but is purely and ſolely nothing elſe but the diſowning, forſaking, and renouncing the Goodneſs, Virtue, Benevolence, Meekneſs, *&c.* of the Divine Nature, that has made itſelf thus ſelf-evident in us, as the true Object of our Worſhip, Conformity, Love, and Adoration. This is the *one true God*, or the Deity of Goodneſs, Virtue, and Love, *&c.* the Certainty of whoſe Being and Providence opens itſelf to you in the ſelf-evident Senſibility of your own Nature; and inſpires his Likeneſs, and Love of his Goodneſs, into you. And as this is the only true Knowlege that you can poſſibly have of God and the Divine Nature, ſo it is a Knowlege not to be debated or leſſened by any Objections of Reaſon, but is as ſelf-evident as your own Life. But to find or know God in Reality, by any outward Proofs, or by any thing but by God himſelf made manifeſt and ſelf-evident in you, will never be your Caſe either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor Heaven, nor Hell, nor the Devil, nor the World, and the Fleſh, can be any otherwiſe knowable

knowable in you, or by you, but by their own Exiſtence and Manifeſtation in you. And all pretended Knowlege of any of theſe Things, beyond or without this ſelf-evident Senſibility of their Birth within you, is only ſuch Knowlege of them, as the blind Man hath of that Light, that never entered into him.

And as this is our only true Knowlege, ſo every Man is, by his Birth and Nature, brought into a certain and ſelf-evident Senſibility of all theſe Things. And if we bring ourſelves by Reaſoning and Diſpute into an Uncertainty about them, it is an Uncertainty that we have created for ourſelves, and comes not from God and Nature. For God and Nature have made that which is our greateſt Concern, to be our greateſt Certainty; and to be known by us in the ſame Self-evidence, as our own Pain or Pleaſure is. For nothing is Religion, or the Truth of Religion, nothing is good or bad to you, but that which is a ſelf-evident Birth within you. So that if you call that only God, and Religion, and Goodneſs, which truly are ſo, and can only be known by their ſelf-evident Powers and Life in you, then you are in the Truth, and the Truth will make you free from all Doubts; and you will no more fear or regard any thing that talkative Reaſon can diſcourſe

againſt it, than againſt your own ſeeing, hearing, or ſenſible Life. But if you turn from *Self-evidence* to *Reaſon* and *Opinion*, you turn from the *Tree of Life*, and you give yourſelf up to certain Deluſion.

Wonder not therefore, my Friend, that though the Myſtery under Conſideration contains the greateſt of Truths, yet I am unwilling to help you to reaſon and ſpeculate upon it; for if you attempt to go farther in it than Self-evidence leads you, you only go ſo far out of it, or from it. For the End of this Myſtery is not to furniſh new or better Matter for Reaſon and Opinion, but to bring Man home to that *Senſibility*, which is ſelf-evident in himſelf, and to lead him only by ſelf-evident Principles, to ſee, and find, and feel the Difference between true and falſe Religion in the ſame Degree of ſelf-evident Certainty, as he ſees and feels the Difference between Fire and Water. This, I ſay, is the great Intent of this Myſtery, to bring Man into a Senſibility of God and Nature, to know and feel, that Good and Evil, Life and Death, are a ſelf-evident Growth and Birth of Nature in Man, according as his Will enters into and works with that which is unchangeably good, or unchangeably evil, in the Working of Nature. Now as the

Workings of Nature are unchangeable in their Effects, and that which is naturally good or evil, must be always so; and seeing Man's Life standeth in Nature, and must work with it, must have only that Good or Evil which is unchangeable in Nature; and seeing his State in Nature, whether good or evil, is, and can be, *only that*, which the sensible, self-evident Powers of his own Life manifest to him; then you see the Fitness and Necessity of your keeping steadily to that, which is *self-evident* in you, as the very *Tree of Life*, the Criterion of all that Truth and Goodness that belongs to you. *Secondly*, you see with what good Reason *Jacob Behmen* so often tells you, That all that he has written, was only to *help Man to seek and find himself*, to see and know his *Place* and *State* in Nature, and how to cooperate with God and Nature in generating a Birth of Heaven within himself. *Thirdly*, you may see how you and I should abuse this blessed Mystery, should we, instead of only and truly seeking and finding its Birth within us, make it a Matter of Reasoning and Opinion.

Academicus. I have neither Power nor Inclination to object to any thing that you have said. But still I must desire you to

aſſiſt me in your own Way, and ſuch as you judge to be ſuitable to the Intention of this Myſtery. I plainly ſee, that the whole Ground of Religion lies in the Knowlege of what God is in himſelf, as diſtinct from Nature; what Nature is in itſelf; what I have from God, and what I am in and from Nature; and how I am to work with it, as God himſelf is and worketh in Nature. For if this Knowlege can be opened in me, then the *Why*, and the *How*, of every Myſtery of Redemption muſt be ſeen to the Bottom.

Theophilus. By Nature are meant, *all the working, ſtirring Properties of Life*, or all the various Senſibilities which Life is capable of finding and feeling in itſelf. And therefore you need only look at the working Senſibilities of your own Life, the ſeveral Kinds and Ways of feeling and finding your own State, to know by a *ſelf-evident* Certainty, what Nature is in itſelf. And thus alſo, in the ſame ſelf-evident Certainty, you may know, that Nature is not God. For as you find, that Nature is opened in you; that all its Properties have their Exiſtence in you; and yet that none of theſe Properties of Life are their own Happineſs, or can make themſelves to be happy, full of Peace, Delight, and Joy, and free from every Want;

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ſo you have a full ſelf-evident Proof, that God is not Nature, but intirely diſtinct from, and ſuperior to, Nature; and that, as conſidered in himſelf, he is *That* which alone can make Nature happy, free from Want, and full of all delightful Satisfaction. And thus you know, not from Hearſay, but from a ſelf-evident Certainty in yourſelf, that God, conſidered as in himſelf, is the *Happineſs*, the *Reſt*, the *Satisfaction*, the *Joy*, the *Fulfilling* of all the Properties and Senſibilities of Nature; and alſo that Nature, in itſelf, is that working Life of various Properties and Senſibilities, which *want* to be made happy, which *reach* after ſomething that they are not, and have not, and which cannot be happy or fulfilled, till ſomething of an higher Nature than themſelves be united with them; that is, the Working of Nature muſt be in Want, in Pain, and Diſſatisfaction, till God (the Bleſſing and Fulfilling of Nature) is manifeſted, found, and enjoyed in it.

Now ſuppoſe you knew no more of what God is in himſelf, diſtinct from Nature, and what Nature is as thus diſtinguiſhed from God, than is already opened in you, you would know enough to be a Key to all that which *Jacob Behmen* ſpeaks of God, and of Nature; and enough alſo to ſhew you how

to cooperate with God and Nature, in bringing forth a New Birth of the Divine Life within you. For as ſoon as you know, that Nature in itſelf is only a working Life of various Senſibilities, which wants ſomething diſtinct from itſelf, and higher than itſelf, to make it happy, then you have a ſelf-evident Certainty of theſe following Truths: *Firſt*, That God, conſidered as in himſelf, is the Bleſſing, the Satisfaction, the Heaven, and Happineſs, of all and every Senſibility of Nature. *Secondly*, That therefore, as the Goſpel teaches, only the *Word*, the *Light*, the Son of God, or *Jeſus Chriſt*, can redeem fallen Nature, reſtore it to its firſt State of Bleſſedneſs in God. *Thirdly*, That therefore, as the Goſpel teaches, you have but *one Thing* to do, and *that* one Thing abſolutely neceſſary to be done; *viz.* to *deny yourſelf*; that is, to turn this fallen Nature from itſelf, from all its own Wills and Workings in the Vanity of this Life, to give up itſelf in Faith, in Hunger and Thirſt after that Light, *Word*, Son, or *Jeſus Chriſt* of God, who is the Fulneſs, the Satisfaction, the Joy, and Bleſſedneſs, of all Nature; who alone can turn every Working and Senſibility of Nature into a Participation of heavenly Satisfaction and Joy. Now what can you

deſire,

desire, or need you to know of God, of Nature, and the Mystery of Christian Redemption, more than this? And yet all this is a self-evident Knowlege, born within you as soon as you turn to it.

Academicus. Oh! Sir, you quite transport me with this short, easy, and yet full Explication of so great a Matter, which has often perplexed me. But now I shall never be at a Loss how to understand the Distinction between God and Nature, and also the absolute Necessity of it; which, when rightly known, sets all the Doctrines and Mysteries of Christian Redemption upon such a Ground as cannot be removed. But still I must beg of you to help me to the same Self-evidence of the Birth and Generation of the Properties of Nature, as they are set forth by *Jacob Behmen*, especially of the Three first Forms, which I perceive to be the Ground of all; and yet their Birth and Generation, their Union with, and Distinction from, one another, I do not enough comprehend, as he sets them forth. Thus, the first *Form* of Nature is said to be *Desire*; which is the Ground and Foundation of all Things. This Desire (the first Property), he saith, is *astringing*, *drawing*, *shutting up*, *compressing*, *hardening*, &c. Now all this is evident enough; for

I have a ſufficient Senſibility, that this is the Nature of Deſire; that, in its ſpiritual Way, it attracts, draws, compreſſes, and would ſhut up, or incloſe, *&c.* But then, it is immediately ſaid, that the Second Property is *Attraction*, *Drawing*, *Sting*, and *Motion*, &c. Now if the Firſt is *Attraction* and *Drawing*, how can the Second be different from it, and yet be Attraction and Drawing?

Theophilus. The Deſire is not one *Property*, but is in itſelf all the Properties of Nature; it is the Ground in which they all dwell, and the Mother out of which they are all born: So that all that is ſaid of the Three Firſt Forms of Nature, is only ſo much ſaid of Three Forms or Properties of the Deſire. For the Deſire is not the Firſt Property of Nature; but every Property hath all that it hath in and from the Deſire. The Firſt Property of the Deſire, or that which is the Peculiarity of its Nature, as diſtinguiſhed from the Second, is, to *compreſs*, *incloſe*, *ſhut up*, &c. whence cometh *Thickneſs*, *Darkneſs*, *Hardneſs*, &c. But no ſooner does the Deſire begin to compreſs, ſhut up, but it brings forth its own greateſt Enemy, and the higheſt Reſiſtance to itſelf: For it cannot *compreſs* or *thicken*, but by drawing or attracting; but drawing and attracting

tracting is quite contrary to ſhutting up, or compreſſing; becauſe drawing or attracting is *Motion*, and every Motion is contrary to ſhutting up or compreſſing together.

And thus your Difficulty is removed: Attraction or Drawing is rightly aſcribed to the Deſire, and rightly called its Second Property, becauſe it is born of it; and yet is directly contrary to that which is the Deſire's Firſt Property or Intention; *viz.* to *compreſs*, to *hold in Stilneſs*, &c.

Now as theſe Two Properties are Two Reſiſtances, not in Two different Things, but are one and the ſame Thing in this Contrariety in and to itſelf, as they are inſeparable, generate each other, are equal in Strength, and can neither of them overcome the other, ſo as to go one Way, but each of them ſtops the other in the ſame Manner; and ſeeing this Deſire cannot ceaſe to be theſe Two contrary Things; *viz.* a *Holding-faſt*, and *Moving-away*, a *Shutting-in*, and a *Going-out*, both in the ſame Degree of Strength; neither able to ſhut up, nor to go out, nor able to ceaſe from either; theſe Two Contrarieties become a *whirling Anguiſh* in itſelf, and ſo bring forth a *Third Property* of *Nature*. And in theſe Three Properties lies the true Ground of all Senſibility of Life,

and

and alſo of every created Thing. Matter, Motion, Darkneſs, Fire, and every natural Power or Quality of any thing, has its Beginning from them. Conſidered in themſelves, they are the working Powers of that great and ſtrong creaturely Life, which cannot be broken, becauſe it begets itſelf, and every Property is included in, and generates each other. It is a Band or Knot of Life, that can never be looſed; nor is capable of Annihilation, becauſe it is a Birth of eternal Nature, which is as unchangeable as God himſelf. And as it ariſes from no outward Thing, but is generated in and from itſelf, its Work is eternal, and can never be made to ceaſe. For as one Property has no Power over the other, but that of *forcing* it to exiſt; as one Property does not weary the other, but always gives Strength to it; ſo there can be no Ceſſation of their Working, but they muſt do, as they do, to all Eternity.

Now the Life of theſe Three Properties is a Life of Three contrary Wills, equally ſtrong and powerful againſt each other; and therefore is a Life of the higheſt Diſquiet, Torment, and Anguiſh, full of the moſt horrible Senſibility. It is a Life that can feel nothing but its own tearing Contrariety, that

that reigns within it. And this is the Life of Nature ſeparated from God; it is the Life of Hell, and the Devils; and is that Life of dark, raging Diſtraction, which every living Creature muſt be in, whoſe firſt Properties of Life are not ſoftened and quieted, either by the Light of God, or the Light of this World, dwelling and making Peace in them. And he that will only ſeek to his Reaſon, to cool the Flame of theſe raging firſt Properties of Life, acts as wiſely as he, whoſe Houſe being on Fire, would only have it extinguiſhed, by reading a Lecture upon the Nature of Water to it.

And now, Sir, you have ſeen plainly enough the Birth, Nature, and Difference, of theſe Three firſt Properties. But let it be ſuppoſed, that you have no Feeling, or inward Senſibility, of theſe Three Properties in the Manner they have been here deſcribed, according to *Jacob Behmen*; yet you have no Reaſon to be troubled at it, or put your Brain upon the Rack how to conceive it, or fear that you muſt want the Benefit of this Knowlege, till you have it as above deſcribed; for you have in yourſelf a moſt ſelf-evident Proof, that the Thing is really ſo; and that Deſire hath *all that* in it which

he

he ſo deeply declares, from its firſt Seed, or Root.

For it is a Thing ſelf-evident to you, that every Deſire, as ſuch, is in itſelf a reſtleſs Torment; that it has Pain, Diſquiet, and Anguiſh, in itſelf; and, as to itſelf, conſiſts of nothing elſe. Now, whether you can, with *Jacob Behmen*, divide this reſtleſs, anguiſhing Deſire into its Three eſſential Parts, of which it conſiſts, matters not, as to the Reality of the Thing itſelf; for you have Senſibility enough, that the Deſire is made up of Pain and Anguiſh, till the Thing deſired is obtained: And therefore you have all the Certainty and Benefit of this Knowlege; and it ſerves the ſame End, as if you knew the Ground of it with the ſame Exactneſs as he has ſet it forth.

You have yourſelf for a Proof, that Deſire and Pain begin together; and this is a full Proof of what was ſaid; *viz.* that Deſire begins with *Two Properties*, that reſiſt and ſtrive againſt one another. Again, you have the ſame Evidence in yourſelf, that the Deſire, left to itſelf, that is, without the leaſt Glimpſe of any Poſſibility of having that which it deſires, is a Degree of Hell, and quite intolerable to itſelf: And this is a ſelf-evident Proof of what was ſaid; *viz.*

that

that the Third and laſt Property of the Deſire, is that whirling Anguiſh, brought forth by the Two firſt Properties: For theſe Three Properties are the Whole of the Deſire; it has nothing more in it. And when your Deſire cannot ceaſe, and yet has nothing but itſelf, without the leaſt Mixture or Feeling of Hope in it, then you have a full Self-evidence of *all that* which the Deſire is, in its Three eſſential, inſeparable Properties, and that ſtrictly according to the Letter of *Jacob Behmen.*

Now all that is Nature, or natural Life within you, is only the Working of Deſire in this painful State; and *that* which can ſet this painful Life at Reſt in you, is ſo much of God, or the Divine Nature, manifeſted in you, and changing your reſtleſs Properties of Life into Peace and Happineſs. And as the working Properties of Deſire are your natural Life, ſo the ſame working Properties are the Life of eternal Nature; from whence, as out of the Womb, your natural Life is brought forth, and hath neither more nor leſs in it than that which is in eternal Nature.

And if the working Properties, which conſtitute the Life of eternal Nature, could be ſuppoſed to be without God in them, eternal Nature would be a mere eternal Hell:

But

But as the eternal Desire, with all its working Properties, is brought forth by the magic Power of the Divine Will, only for this End, that the holy Deity may manifest a Heaven of Glory in them; so eternal Nature always was, and always must be, a Kingdom of Heaven, or the unchangeable Manifestation of the invisible God in an outward Sensibility of Life, Happiness, Glory, and Majesty.

Academicus. I am fully satisfied as to this Point; and all that you have said, has the Evidence of Light at Noon-day. And I hope you will now go on in the Birth of the Four remaining Properties; and shew me, in the same Degree of Evidence, how these Three Properties bring forth the Four following ones, which turn Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven.

Theophilus. These Three Properties of Nature cannot bring forth the Four following ones. They can bring forth nothing but themselves to all Eternity, nor can ever be any thing else in themselves, but what they were at first. Nature can rise no higher than this painful State; and its painful working Contrariety must always be the Ground of all Life, and all Sensibility of Life. For if (1.) This Shutting-up, or Compressing; and

(2.)

(2.) This Reſiſtance to it; and (3.) This Whirling ariſing from both, was ever to ceaſe, there Life, and all Senſibility, muſt ceaſe with them; and therefore theſe Three Properties muſt always do as they do, as the only poſſible Ground of every Kind and Degree of every creaturely Life, both in Heaven, and on Earth.

But if Life is to be happy, ſomething elſe muſt come into them, not to deſtroy their natural Working, but to make every Contrariety in them a Strife of Joy, and delightful Senſibilities. Thus, (1.) Compreſſing, or Shutting-up, muſt find itſelf only to compreſs and keep in Light and Love; (2.) The Attraction or Drawing-motion, muſt find itſelf to be the Drawing and Motion of Love; and, (3.) The whirling Anguiſh muſt whirl ſtill, but as a *Tranſport of Joy* unavoidably brought forth from the Strife of Love in the Two Properties of which it is born. And thus Nature remains in its full Strength; it compreſſes, it attracts, and it whirls, as it did at firſt; and nothing is loſt, or taken from it, but its Hatred, Wrath, and Miſery. Now here you are to obſerve, that every Thing or Creature, either in Heaven, Hell, or this World, hath its Subſtance, or all that is Subſtantiality in it, ſolely from theſe Three

Firſt

Firſt Properties of Nature. The creaturely Subſtance of an Angel, a Devil, or a dead Flint, all ſtand in theſe Three Firſt Forms of Nature. And all the Difference betwixt high and low, ſpiritual and material, in the Creatures, ariſes from their different Participation of the Four following Forms of Nature. But the Four following Forms cannot exiſt, or manifeſt themſelves, but in the Three firſt; and therefore the Three Firſt are, and muſt be, as well in the higheſt as in the loweſt of Creatures: They are the firſt *Something*, or *Subſtantiality* of Nature, in which the Light, and Love, and Spirit of God could manifeſt itſelf; for Spirit cannot work without ſomething to work in and upon, and in which it may be found; nor could *Light* ſhine, unleſs there was *ſomething* in Nature *thicker* than itſelf, to receive and reflect it: And therefore, *Thickneſs* or Darkneſs is, and muſt be, as eternal as the *viſible* or *ſhining* Light. Darkneſs is ſo far from being a mere *Negation*, or only an *Abſence*, of the Light, that it is the *firſt* and *only* Subſtance, and the Ground of all the poſſible Subſtantiality in Nature, and the ſubſtantial Manifeſter of Light itſelf, which could have no *Viſibility*, *Shine*, or *Colour*, but in, and through, and by the Subſtantiality of Darkneſs

neſs or Thickneſs. This Darkneſs, Thickneſs, or Subſtantiality, is not co-exiſtent with, or independent of, God, but is the *compreſſing, aſtringing, thickening* Work of the firſt Property of the Deſire; which Deſire comes eternally from God, only as a magic Birth from the Will of the Deity, which willeth to come out of its Hiddenneſs into an outward Viſibility of a working Life. And therefore the Deſire is the Beginning of Nature; it compreſſeth and thickeneth. But what does it compreſs and thicken? Why, Nothing but itſelf; *viz.* its own Three Properties. And theſe Three Properties thus brought forth, tied and bound in one another, are, from Eternity to Eternity, all the Subſtantiality and Thickneſs, that is or ever can be in Nature, or any Creature, from the Higheſt to the Loweſt. And they are thus brought forth in this indiſſolvable Band in and by the Deſire, that the inviſible Light and Life of the hidden Deity may have its *Something* to move and ſhine in; his hidden Spirit have *Something* to work and manifeſt itſelf in; his hidden Love have *Something* into which it may give itſelf; and his hidden Life have Something in which it can open itſelf in a Variety of Births of Life. And *this Something* is the *working compreſſing*

Desire, which includes in itself, (1.) A continual Thickening, which is Darkness and Substantiality: (2.) Motion or Resistance to this Thickening, which is the Ground of all Sensibility; and, (3.) A restless State of Whirling from these two Properties, which is the very Nature and Power of Life. And thus these three Properties of the Desire, are that *sufficient Something*, in which the Deity, by entering into it, can manifest his hidden Power in all the Substances and working Properties of Nature, by turning them all in their different Workings into an endless Variety of delightful Forms and Sensibilities of the creaturely Life.

Now this first Thickness, Darkness, or Substantiality, brought forth in the Desire, though it is not Matter, as Matter is seen and found in this World; yet these two Things must be affirmed of it: *First*, That it stands in the same Place, answers the same Ends, and is distinguished from Light and Spirit in the eternal World, just as Matter in this World stands distinguished from the Light and Spirit of this World. *Secondly*, That all the *Darkness*, Thickness, and Matter of every Kind in this World, is nothing else in itself, but the first Thickness, Darkness, and Substantiality in the Desire, brought down by

various

various Steps into such Kinds of Materiality as are here to be seen. Look at what Kind of Materiality you will in this World; it is, in its whole Nature, nothing else but the Darkness or Thickness of the eternal World, brought into a farther Degree of Thickness and Compression. And now we are come to see the true Ground; (1.) How the Angels could destroy their Kingdom, or lose all the Light and Happiness of Heaven in it: And, (2.) How also, their wasted, spoiled, darkened Habitation in the divided Properties of Nature, could be turned, and created by God, as it is, into this new Form of a material World.

The first Three Properties of Nature were never to have been seen or known, as they are in themselves, by any Creature; their Thickness, Strife, and Darkness, were brought forth by God, in Union with the Light, and Glory, and Majesty of Heaven; and only for that End, that the holy Deity might be made manifest in them. And therefore their own Nature, as they are in themselves, without God in them, could only then be first known, when the Angels turned their Desire backwards to search and find the Ground and Original of Life, which could not be found, till these Properties were found, in which the

original Ground of Life lay hid. This turning of their Desire into the Origin of Life, was their whole turning from the Light of God; and therefore they found themselves where they had turned their Desire; that is, in the Centre of Nature; *viz.* in the first Properties of Nature, which is the *Dark Centre*, or Ground of Life, which never should have been known or manifest to any Creature. For by the Centre of Nature, or the *Dark Centre*, you are always to understand these three first Properties; which, when without or separate from the Light and Goodness of the Deity in them, are in themselves only the Thickness, and Rage, and Darkness, of an omnipotent *Compressing*, an omnipotent *Resistance* to it, and omnipotent *Whirling* from these two omnipotent Contrarieties. I call them all omnipotent, because they cannot be stopped, but do all that they would; and though they are contrary to one another, yet each of them gives Strength to the other; so that the Omnipotence of the one, is the Omnipotence of the other.——And this is the boundless, incessant, strong Rage, Darkness, and Strife, of the hellish Life, which only is that, which these Three Properties of Nature, when left to themselves, can feel or find. Now the Angels, which turned their Desire into this Centre

tre of Nature, fell into the Life and working Power of these Three Properties; they felt nothing else in themselves, but these Properties; they had no other Will or Power of working, but as these Properties worked; and therefore, as living and active Creatures, they could only live, and act, and co-operate, or unite with that Ground of Nature without them, which was the *same* and *one* with their own Nature; and therefore, all that they could do, was to stir up, awaken, call forth, and act with that Thickness, and Darkness, and Strife, that was hidden in Nature, just as the Toad, in a fine Garden, only sucks the Poison that is hid in a good Herb. So the fallen Angels, though in Heaven, having only the Centre of Nature in themselves, could only find and work with that Centre and Root of Darkness, on which the heavenly Glory stood. But from this Power which they had of working in the Centre of Nature, hence came forth a *dark, wrathful Substantiality*, separated from the Light and Glory of the holy Deity; and thus a *new Kind* of Substantiality appeared in their Kingdom; and their outward Habitation was like their inward Life; *viz.* a *Manifestation* of Nature fallen from God. And here now, you clearly see, how the First Thickness or Compression of the First Property of

Nature, which was only the *hidden Substantiality* of the Light and Glory of Heaven, came into a *more outward* State, and made its first Approach or Step towards *Matter*, as you now see it. For there was now a *Thickness*, a *Darkness*, and Hardness, which never had been before; for the Light being lost, then the First Property of Nature lost its beatified State of Meekness, Transparency, and spiritual Fluidity; and became stiff, rigid, dark, and hard; and this, as I said, was its *first* Step or Descent towards the Hardness and Darkness of the Matter of this World, till it came to be Earth and Stones, by the creating Power of God. And thus it came to pass, as *Moses* speaks, *that Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep*. A State, that had no Possibility of Existence, till the Sin of Angels had manifested the hidden Centre of Nature, in the Working of its Three Properties, without the Light of God in them.

Now as a new Thickness of Darkness, Hardness, or Substantiality, was manifested by the strong working Powers of the Angels in the Centre, or the first Properties of fallen Nature; so God, to manifest his Wisdom and Goodness towards this fallen Nature, took all these Properties in their own working Way; and made them in their own way of

Working,

Working, to ſtop and overcome the Evil that was brought forth by them. For the Will of God, joining with the wrathful *Aſtringency* of the firſt compreſſing Property of Nature, became the *Divine Fiat*, which increaſed this compacting Property to ſuch a Degree, as created or compacted the darkened Subſtantiality into a Globe of Earth and Stones. And this ſame Divine *Fiat*, or creating Power, which coagulated the Groſſneſs into Earth and Stones, compreſſed or coagulated all that was ſubſtantial, or belonged to Subſtantiality through their whole Kingdom, as well the heavenly as the earthly Part of it; ſo that all their Kingdom, as to its Subſtantiality, loſt its Spirituality, and entered into a new created or compacted State of Thickneſs, as well the ſpoiled as the unſpoiled Part of their Kingdom. And as ſoon as this was done, the Angels loſt all their Power in it, and over it. They could kindle no more Wrath in its heavenly Part, nor make any Uſe of that which they had ſpoiled, becauſe all was ſhut up together in this new Compaction, with which the Spirituality of their Nature could have no Communication. And ſo they were left Priſoners in their own Chains of Darkneſs, unable to ſtir up Wrath any-where but in themſelves. All this was done in the firſt

Day of the Creation, when the *Fiat* of God compreſſed or created their whole Kingdom into a Heaven and Earth. Hence it is; *viz.* from a Compaction of their whole Kingdom into a new-created Heaven and Earth; that all Things in this World, all its Elements and Stars, are a Mixture of Good and Evil, have ſomething of the Goodneſs of Heaven, and ſomething of the Wrath and Evil of Hell in them. Hence is the great Variety of metallic Ores and precious Stones in the Earth; the good and bad Qualities in Fire, Air, and Water. It is becauſe the Divine *Fiat*, or compacting Power, came at once in the utmoſt Swiftneſs upon their whole Kingdom, as the Good and Evil ſtood in Strife againſt each other, and compreſſed all into a State of Ceſſation and Conjunction with one another, as in the Priſon of this new-created Materiality. And thus the heavenly and helliſh Part of their Kingdom, Light and Darkneſs, Fluidity and Hardneſs, Meekneſs and Wrath, Good and Evil, were all ſhut up together in the ſame ſudden Compaction; in which they lay, as in a State of Death, till the Divine *Fiat* ſhould awaken a Life in it.

Now the Three Firſt Properties of Nature; the Firſt, a *Shutting* up; the Second, a *Running* out; and the Third, a *Whirling*; were by the

Divine

Divine *Fiat*, in the three firſt Days of the Creation, become the Ground of an earthly, a watery, and airy Materiality, all according to the working Nature of the Three Properties; and all of them having ſomething of an heavenly Nature ſhut up in them, which wanted to be delivered from its Bondage. Hence this threefold Materiality of Earth, Water, and Air, became a Subject fit for the Birth of the fourth Property of Nature. And therefore, on the fourth Day of the Creation, the Divine *Fiat* kindled in this *anguiſhing* Materiality, out of that very *Fire* and *Light* that was compacted and hid in it, the fourth Property of Nature (the eternal Fire), as a Globe of Fire and Light, which was to ſtand as an Out-birth of the eternal Fire, in the midſt of this new-created Materiality, and become the Opener of all the aſtral Life and Light in this World. And as the eternal Fire, the fourth Property of eternal Nature, is not a moveable Thing that can change its Place, but muſt be always in the Place of its Birth, ſtanding for ever, as a Birth, in the Midſt of the ſeven Properties, for ever changing the three firſt Properties of Nature into the three laſt Properties of the Kingdom of Heaven; ſo the Sun, the true Out-birth of the eternal Fire, and having the ſame Birth and Office in this material

material World, as the eternal Fire hath in eternal Nature, is not, cannot be, a *moveable* Thing, or be in any *other Place* in this World, than where it is; but is, and must be, the *Centre* or Heart of this whole Syſtem, ever ſeparating the three firſt Properties of this material World, from the three that follow, and ever changing the three firſt Forms of material Wrath into the three following Forms of terreſtrial Life, Light, and all delightful Senſibilities; in ſtrict Conformity to that, which the eternal Fire does in eternal Nature, changing the Root, or firſt Properties of Nature, into a Kingdom of God, and heavenly Glory. For the *Sun* is not a Body of Fire brought into the Place where it is; but the *kindled Place* is its Body and Birth; and therefore it is as immoveable as Place is, and muſt be as it is; *viz.* a Place giving forth Fire and Light till all material Nature is diſſolved. The Place is kindled, not by any foreign Fire, but thus: In the firſt Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom into this new Materiality, the good and bad Part, that is, the ſpoiled and unſpoiled Subſtantiality of their whole Kingdom, was ſhut up in this new Compreſſion or Materiality, in one and the ſame State of Death. *Secondly*, In the Beginning of the Creation,

Creation, God, ſaid, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*; not a *ſhining* Light, for that came firſt from the Birth of the Sun, but a Power or Virtue of heavenly Light, not yet in a *viſible, material Shine*, but as an *uncreated* Power of Light, entering into this whole Materiality, to ſtir up, and awaken the good Part of the heavenly Subſtantiality, that was ſhut up in the Compaction of this new Materiality.

Without theſe two Things, material Nature muſt have continued in its Darkneſs, and no fourth Form of Fire could ever have come forth in it. But from theſe two Things, *viz.* the heavenly Subſtantiality, ſtirred up by the Power of Light entering into it, the three firſt Properties of Darkneſs were brought into a mere anguiſhing State; from whence, by the Divine *Fiat*, the fourth Form of material Nature kindled itſelf, as a Fire, and *broke forth* in the Place of the Sun, and muſt be ever burning and flaming in the Midſt of the material Syſtem; becauſe it is born of the three firſt Properties of Darkneſs, and brings forth the three laſt Properties of Light, and Life, and the Joy of Nature; and therefore muſt always be in the Midſt of the ſix Properties of Nature, itſelf making the Number to be ſeven. And thus the Sun, as the fourth

Form

Form of Nature, muſt always ſtand in the Midſt of the whole material Syſtem. And this proved, not as *Copernicus* has proved it, from reaſonable Conjectures, and outward Arguments, but from the internal Nature of its Birth, the firſt Root from which it proceeds, and the abſolute Impoſſibility of its being otherwiſe. And thus it is, that the Truth and Depth of Nature is opened by the Spirit of God, in the Myſtery made known to our illiterate Shoemaker. And thus you have a ſhort Sketch, how this World came to be as it is. It is deſcended as an Out-birth of the eternal World, and all the ſeven Properties of eternal Nature work in it, as they work in Eternity; and the Eternity is manifeſted in the temporary Working of a new World, which is only to ſtand in this State of Thickneſs or Compaction for a time, till the Goodneſs of God towards fallen Nature has been ſufficiently manifeſted thereby.

For as this material Syſtem of Things may, in a good Senſe, be ſaid to be an unnatural State, occaſioned by the Diſorders which the Fall of Angels brought into Nature; and as it had no Beginning, but from the Will of God, commanding the firſt Property of Nature to coagulate and compreſs their diſordered Kingdom into a new Thickneſs or Materiality,

riality, only as a Remedy to ſtop, remove, and overcome the Evil in Nature; ſo when this Remedy ſhall have had its Trial, and the Will of God ſhall no longer will this compreſſing together; then all that has been brought together by it, muſt fall back again into its firſt Eternity. And then, without any Poſſibility of being otherwiſe, every Birth in this World, that belongs to the Root or Centre of Nature, and has worked with it, muſt fall down into that eternal Abyſs of Darkneſs, on which the Light of God for ever ſtands, unknown to it. And every Life that is born of Heaven, and has worked with it, muſt aſcend into the Kingdom of God, or Abyſs of Divine Glory and Majeſty.

Oh *Academicus!* Look now (whilſt theſe Thoughts are alive in you) at worldly Greatneſs, fleſhly Wiſdom, and earthly Schemes of Happineſs; and tell me, if you can, what a Nothingneſs, what a Folly and Deluſion, there is in them? Look again at the Apoſtle's Pilgrim, abſtaining from worldly Luſts, deſiring to know nothing but Chriſt, and him crucified; living in the Spirit of Prayer, and Thirſt after God; ſtriving in every thing after the fulleſt Conformity to the Tempers, Spirit, Life, and Behaviour of Chriſt in this World; and then tell me, whether Heaven and Earth,

God

God and Nature, and all that is great, and wise, and happy, does not call upon you to be this Pilgrim.

Academicus. Truly, Sir, I enough see, that all worldly Wisdom, and ambitious Views of a Glory of Life in the Things and Concerns of this World, are no better than vain Attempts to be blessed and happy from the Ruins of the angelic Kingdom. For this World is only a Thickness and Materiality of the bestial Life, built upon the Ground of Hell; that is, upon the first Properties of fallen Nature, brought into a harder, more compacted State of Existence than they have in Hell, and kindled into an astral, terrestrial, bestial Life, by the Power of the Sun. The bestial Life, therefore, is the highest Good and Happiness in it; and the Creatures of this World have nothing that they seek for further in it. But Man, being not created for it, but by Sin fallen into it, is the only Creature that makes an unnatural Use of it, and seeks for that in it, and by it, which cannot be found in it. Man, having been wise, great, and happy in his Creation, though they are all lost, has yet some remaining Sensibility of them, though fallen into a World, that cannot help him to them. Hence it is, that he would be wise, and great, and happy in a World, that has

no Happineſs but for Beaſts; and can only help Man to know, that he is poor and miſerable, and baniſhed from his true native Country.

But, inſtead of learning this one Leſſon of Truth, from the World he is in, which is all the Wiſdom, Greatneſs, and Happineſs, that can be had from it; he gives himſelf up to a Wiſdom that is Fooliſhneſs, a Greatneſs that is all Meanneſs, and a Happineſs that begins and ends in Torment and Deluſion. Would you ſee all his Greatneſs, Wiſdom, and Happineſs united, the Sum total of earthly Glory! It is, when he has in his Cap the Feathers of ſome Birds, wears a painted Ribband, laced Cloaths, is called by ſome new Name, and drawn from Place to Place by a Number of Beaſts. Now, poor, and mean, and unnatural as this Fiction of earthly Glory is; yet this is the powerful Idol, that carries all before it! that deſtroys all Senſe of Goodneſs, and Divine Virtue! and keeps the Heart of Man ſo earneſtly devoted to it, that he has no Senſe of the Eternity that is in him; that Eternity brought him forth, and Eternity will take him again!

Theophilus. It is true, *Academicus*, that the higheſt Good of this World is its beſtial Life; and therefore it has no more, or other, Happineſs for a Man than for a Beaſt; can

give

give no more to one, than to the other; *viz.* Food and Raiment; with which the beſtial Life in Man ought to be content, as well as in the Beaſt. But ſeeing Man, in ſpite of the Nature of Things, will have an earthly Glory of Life; thence it is, that the Wiſdom of this World is, and muſt be, Fooliſhneſs with God, and will be Fooliſhneſs with Man, as ſoon as he gets but a moderate Knowlege of himſelf. But give me leave juſt to obſerve, that though this material World has no higher Happineſs than the beſtial Life; yet God hath much higher Ends in creating it. For though the dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature could only, in their Compaction, be made the Ground of a vegetable and beſtial Life; yet you are to obſerve, that in the Creation of this World; *viz. in the Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom*; the unſpoiled heavenly Part thereof was ſhut up with that, in which the Wrath was kindled: And that for theſe two great Ends; *Firſt*, That, by this Compaction, it might be taken out of the Power of the evil Angels, that they might not go on in kindling Wrath in it. *Secondly*, That this reſerved good Part of their Kingdom might be the Foundation and Ground of an heavenly paradiſical Life, and a new Hoſt of heavenly Creatures, inſtead of the fallen

fallen Angels. Now, to do this, God created an human Angel, who was to call forth the paradifical Life out of the compacted heavenly Subſtantiality, as the Sun opened a vegetable beſtial Life, out of the groſs Subſtantiality of the material World.

God breathed the Triune Spirit of the holy Deity into a Body taken out of the Earth, that is, into a Body of that *heavenly Subſtantiality*, that was ſhut up in the Earth, as well as in every other Part of this material Syſtem; and therefore his Body is rightly ſaid to be taken or formed out of the Earth, becauſe it was formed of that Subſtantiality, that was ſhut up in the Earth.

But when his wandering Eye had raiſed a longing Deſire to know what the earthly Life was in its Good and Evil, and took the certain Means of knowing it; then, as his Soul loſt the Light and Spirit of God, ſo it loſt alſo that heavenly luminous Body, in which the Light and Spirit of God could dwell, as it dwelleth in Heaven. And when this heavenly luminous Corporeity was loſt, and ſhut up again in that earthly Bondage and Compaction, in which it lay, before it was his Body; then the poor fallen Soul was only cloathed with the groſs Corruptibility of beſtial Fleſh and Blood. You are to underſtand this Matter

thus: When his Body was formed out of that heavenly Substantiality, that was in the Compaction of the Earth, it was not intirely separated from all earthly Materiality (because he was to have a Body of this World, as well as of the heavenly World); but its *State* in the earthly Materiality was *intirely changed*; it was till then shut up in the earthly Compaction, but now it is called out of that *earthly Death* into a State of Life; it is set free from the Power of the Earth, in a Superiority over it, to be its Happiness, and open its own Glory in it, and through it.

And thus you see the *Possibility*, the *Truth*, and the *Manner* of the Thing; how his heavenly Body was taken out of the Earth at his Creation, set in Freedom from it, and in a living Superiority over it; how, at the Fall, it was swallowed up, or compacted again in *its own first Earth*; *viz.* the earthly Body, or Materiality of *Adam*: For as it was not separated from this earthly Materiality, but only brought to Life in it, and Superiority over it; so when the divine Light, which was the Life of this Body, was lost, it then fell again into a State of Death in that gross Materiality, under which it lay before. And thus, in the strictest Truth, the Body of *Adam* returned again to that

very Earth, or Duſt, from whence it was taken.

Now, when this happened, the fallen Angels entered again into ſome Power in their loſt Kingdom. There was then ſomething found, with which they could work, and join their own Power. For as the Soul of Man had loſt the Light and Spirit of Heaven, ſo the ſame *dark Centre* of Nature, or the Three firſt wrathful Properties, were opened in it, as are opened in the fallen Angels. And thus they got Entrance into the awakened Hell in Man, and can work in it. For as often as Man ſtirred, followed, or worked with his Will according to theſe Properties, the Devil could enter into, and work with him; and ſo the firſt Son of fallen Man was made a Murderer. And hence it is, that Sin and Wickedneſs have known no Bounds; it is becauſe it is the joint Work of fallen Angels, and fallen Man.

Stay a while, Sir, in View of theſe Truths: Here you ſee the Seat and Ground, the Birth and Growth of all Sin and Evil; it lies in theſe Three dark, ſelfiſh, ſelf-willed, wrathful, helliſh Properties of the fallen Soul. This is the *dark Centre* of Nature, in which the Devils have all their own Power in themſelves, and all their Power in you;—

and till you resist this Hell within you, till you live in Contrariety to it, the Devils will not flee from you.

Here also you see, in a self-evident Light, the deep Ground, and absolute Necessity, of *that one* Redemption, which is called, and is, the *Meekness and heavenly Blood of the Lamb of God.* For these Words in their true Ground mean only the Changing of the Three first dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature, into the Three last Properties of the heavenly Life, Light, and Love, which is the Life of God restored to the Soul, or the Light, and Spirit, or Word of God born again in it. Let me only add this one Word; Turn from Wrath of every Kind, as you would flee from the most horrid Devil; for it is his, it is he, and his Strength in you. Whether you look at Rage and Anger in a Tempest, a Beast, or a Man, it is but one and the same Thing, from one and the same Cause; and therefore your own Wrath is to be turned from, as the same with that of Hell; and which has its Birth and Strength from that Hell or Centre of Nature, which the Fall of Angels hath made known; and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be in a Man, a Beast, or the Elements of this World. And this must be, till the

Centre

Centre of Nature is again in its Place of Hiddenneſs, by being wholly overcome by Heaven. Embrace therefore every Meekneſs of Love and Humility with the ſame Eagerneſs as you would fall down at the Feet of *Jeſus Chriſt*; for it his, it is he, and his Power of Salvation in you. Enter into no Strife, or Self-defence againſt any one, that either reproaches you, or your Doctrine; but remember, that if you are to join with *Chriſt* in doing Good, your Sword of natural Wrath muſt be locked up in its own Sheath; no Weapons of Fleſh are to be uſed; but you muſt work only in the Meekneſs, the Sweetneſs, the Humility, the Love and Patience of the Lamb of God; who, as ſuch, is the only Doer of Good, the only Overcomer of Wrath, and the one Redemption of fallen Nature. If you are reproached as an *Enthuſiaſt*, do not take Comfort in thinking, that it is the Truth of your own Piety, or the Want of it in others, that gives Occaſion to the Charge; for though both of theſe ſhould happen to be the Caſe, yet they are not proper Reflections for you; and if you take your Peace from them, it is not the Peace of God in you: But as in good Report, you are to be as though you heard it not, aſcribe nothing to yourſelf from it; ſo

in evil Report, Self is just as much to be forgotten; and both of them are to be used, only as an Occasion to generate Humility, Meekness, Love, and the Spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourself, and all that speak either well or ill of you. For this is the Will and Working of Heaven; it has but one Will, and one Work; and that is, to change all the Wrath, Evil, and Disorder of Nature, into a Kingdom of God. And therefore he that would be a Servant of God, and work with Heaven, must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth, in that one Spirit, and one Will, with which Heaven ruleth over all the Earth.

You rejoice to think, that you know the true Ground of your Redemption; how Heaven comes again into the fallen Soul, when that Property of Light and Love, which is called the *Fifth* Property of Nature, is generated in it. It is indeed a blessed Knowlege; but its Blessedness is only then yours, when yourself are this *Fifth Property*, that is, when your Life is a Life of this Fifth Property; when, whatever you do, where-ever you go, or whatever you meet, you only do as this Fifth Property doth, give nothing but that which it giveth; *viz.* its gentle Light

and

and Love to every Man, and every Thing, whether it be good or bad. For this Property hath nothing elſe to give, and yet is always giving; its Nature is, to communicate and impart itſelf, not here or there, but always and every-where; it has no other Will. When therefore this Property (the *Chriſt* of God, the Life of Heaven) is born in you, Friend and Foe will have the ſame from you; you will have loſt all Reſentment; you will love your Enemies; bleſs them that curſe you; pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you; and have but one Will towards every Man, and that is, that Light and Love may do that for him, which they have done for you.

Academicus. Oh! *Theophilus*, you have given me more than I know how to contain; and yet have increaſed my Thirſt after more ſtill. You have ſo touched the Cord of Love within me, that all my Nature ſtands in a trembling Deſire after it; I would fain feel nothing elſe but the gentle godlike Power of Love, living in my Heart. Pray *therefore*, of all Things, help me to underſtand how the Fire, the Fourth Property of Nature, is born; and how it turns the Three firſt wrathful Forms into the Three following Forms of heavenly Joy, Triumph, and Happineſs;

the First of which Three Forms, is this *Fifth* of Light and Love: Therefore, help me here, I beseech you.

Theophilus. What a *Therefore* have you here drawn? That therefore, of all Things, I must needs help you to an *Opinion*, or *notional* Knowlege, *how* the Fire is born, and *how* it turns Nature into a Kingdom of God. For was I to join with you in forming Notions of *this How*, I should only help you to lose all, by being content with the Shadow, instead of the Substance.

You say, that your Nature stands in a *trembling Desire* after the Birth of this Light and Love; If so, you stand in the very Place of its Birth, and must stand there till it is born in you. It can be born no-where else, nor in any other Manner; and all that *Jacob Behmen* has written, is only to direct and bring you to this Place of its Birth. He himself has given you all the hearsay Knowlege that you can have of it; for he can give you no more from the plainest Words. And therefore, to help any one to work with his Brain for clear Notions, and rational Conceptions, of what he has written, is helping him to do and be that, which all his Works, from the Beginning to the End, absolutely declare against, as contrary to the

whole

whole Nature and End of them. Which ſpeak, as he ſaith, with the Sound of a Trumpet; and chiefly to awaken Man out of the Dream and Death of rational, notional, and hearſay Knowlege; and to ſhew him, that his own inward Hunger and Thirſt after God, is that alone which can and muſt open the Fountain of Light and Divine Knowlege in him.

But to ſpeak a Word or Two of the *Fire*, whoſe Birth you want to know. You know already, better than any Words can tell you, from a ſelf-evident Knowlege, that *Nature is in you*; that it is not God, *but is* that which *wants* God, or its true Good; and muſt be an Emptineſs, a Pain, and Want, till God is manifeſted in it. If you aſk why Nature is only a State of Want and Diſquiet, and unable to be content with itſelf; it is becauſe the eternal, uncreated, incomprehenſible Light, which no Creature can enter into, is that which gave Birth to all Nature, and from whence all Nature hath its Hungering, and State of Want. For Nature had never come into Being, but that the eternal, incomprehenſible Light longed to be manifeſted in an *outſpoken* Life of Nature and Creatures, and in a *Viſibility* and *Shine* of Glory: Therefore, as Nature came forth

forth from this first Longing of the Light to be manifested in it, so Nature is in itself only a Want and Hungering, which the Light alone has raised, and can only satisfy.

Now from this Longing on both Sides, Nature wanting God, and God wanting to be manifested in Nature, the Union of both is effected; which is the Birth of that eternal Fire, or Fourth Form of Nature, which is always burning in the same Degree, that is, always doing the *same Thing*; *viz.* always overcoming and shutting up the Three first Forms of Natue, and making them to be the hidden Root and Centre of Nature; and always bringing forth out of them the Three following Properties of Light and Love, and every joyful Sensibility of Life; that is, changing Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven. Now *that* which makes this Change in the Properties of Nature is, and is rightly called, Fire, in the strictest literal Meaning of the Word; because all that we can conceive as Fire in this World, hath its whole Nature, Power, and Existence, from it. Not only the Fire of Life in Animals and Vegetables, but the Fire in the Kitchen, and the Candle, are each of them kindled as it is kindled, and doth all that it doth from this Fourth Property, or Fire of eternal Nature.

Nature. The Thickneſs and Darkneſs in the Wood, and the Candle, have Fire kindled in them, and Light from that Fire, in no other Way, than as the Fourth Property is a Fire from the Thickneſs and Darkneſs of Nature, kindled by the Light of God entering into Union with it. Had the Wood, and the Candle, no *Water* or *Oil* in them, neither of them could give forth Fire and Light. Now Water and Oil have the Properties of Light in them: When therefore the Properties of Nature in the Wood, and the Candle, are put into Strife, and begin to work in Blackneſs and Darkneſs (which is the Beginning of every Fire), they by this Strife open an Entrance for the Properties of Light in the Water, and the Oil, to mix and unite with them; and by this Union of Darkneſs and Light, that Fire is kindled, which turns the Darkneſs of the Wood and Candle into a Shining and Light. And thus does every Fire kindled in this World bear an infallible Witneſs to the *Kindling*, the *Nature*, and *Power*, of that eternal Fire, which, kindled by the Oil of Divine Light, changes the firſt dark Properties of Nature into the Light and Majeſty of Heaven. Now what would you know more of Fire, or its Birth, than that it is, and only can be, kindled by the

Light

Light of God entering into, and uniting with, the first Properties of Nature in the Soul? Leave off therefore all working with your Reason in the Way of Notions; empty your Heart of all vain Satisfactions in earthly Things, that so the first Properties of Nature in your Soul, finding their Misery, and Want of God, may make you to be all Hunger, and Faith, and Desire of him. And then the Fire must kindle; nothing can hinder it; God will then infallibly come as a Fire and Light into your Soul, changing all the wanting, empty, restless Properties of your natural Life, into a Sweetness of a New Birth of Rest and Peace in him.

For nothing *works* either in God, or Nature, or Creature, but *Desire*. And as God created Angels and Men out of eternal Nature, only through a longing Desire of manifesting his own Goodness and Happiness in them, so every Angel and Man must find God, as a Life of Happiness and Goodness in him, as soon as Nature, either in Angel or Man, is become a Hunger after God. For Hunger does all in all Worlds, and finds all that it wants, and hungers after. Every Thing had its Beginning in it, and from it; and every Thing is led by it to all its Happiness.

Academicus.

Academicus. I am quite ſatisfied in all my Demands, and will aſk for no more Help, as to the Uſe I am to make of our Author's Writings. Only tell me when they will all come forth in a new Edition, or which will be publiſhed firſt; for I want ſeveral of them, which I could never get.

Theophilus. If you have but Two or Three of his Books, it is enough; for every one of them has all in it that you need be taught, and ſufficiently opens the Ground of the whole Myſtery of the Chriſtian Redemption. He himſelf thought his Books to be too numerous; and expreſſed his Wiſh, that they were all reduced into one. As he wrote without any Art, and had no Knowlege of Regularity of Compoſition; ſo whatever particular Matter he occaſionally entered upon, he always began again afreſh from the ſame firſt Ground, and full Opening of the Myſtery of Nature, from whence he explained and determined the Matter he was upon. And it was this frequent, and almoſt conſtant, Repetition of one and the ſame Ground that ſwelled his Writings into ſo many Volumes; though it may be ſaid, that there is nothing ſeparately in any of his Books, but what is to be found in almoſt every other, though not ſo largely ſet forth. You have no need

therefore to run with Eagerneſs through all his Books; but the Thing that you are to intend and look for, is the *Ground* and Foundation on which all his Doctrines are built, which contains the true Philoſophy, or *fundamental Opening of all the Powers that work both in Nature and Grace*; and that by this Knowlege you may become a true Workman yourſelf; and know how to conform to, and concur with, all that the working Powers, either of Nature or Grace, require of you. Now this Ground and Foundation of all is (as far as Words can do it) opened to you in every one of his Books: And you have been already alſo ſufficiently brought into the Knowlege of it, by what has been ſaid of the *Birth* of Nature; what it is, how it works, how it came into Being, how it is diſtinct from God, how it wants God, how God is manifeſted in it, how every After-thing is from and out of it, is all that it is, and hath all that it hath, in it, and by it, and muſt have all its Happineſs or Miſery, according as it works with, or contrary to Nature. From this fundamental Ground, or Opening of the working Powers of Nature, you have ſeen how Angels could, and did, loſe their firſt State in Nature; and how a Second new Creation could, and did,

come

come out of their fallen State and Kingdom, all according to the Powers of fallen Nature, over-ruled, and governed, and put into a new Way by the good *creating Fiat* of God. You have seen how this new Creation, with Man its Lord, could, and did, lose also their First created State in Nature; and how God, over-ruling fallen Nature again, did, by his merciful *redeeming Fiat*, or by the Means of the holy *Jesus*, put this fallen new Creation in a State of Recovery, and all done according to the Powers, and Workings, and Possibilities of Nature. So that nothing is done arbitrarily, or by mere Will, but every thing in Conformity to the unchangeable Workings and Powers of Nature; only directed, assisted, and helped, by the Mercy of his *redeeming Fiat*, so far as Nature was capable of being helped. This, Sir, is the true and fundamental Ground of all his Doctrines; and, standing upon this Ground, you stand in the Centre of Truth, whence every thing that you need to know of God, of Nature, of Heaven, of Hell, of the Fall of Man, of his Redemption only and solely in and by the Word or Son of God, is known in such self-evident Certainty, as you find and know the Workings of your own Life: And also, that Happiness or Misery,

Life

Life or Death, can only be had, or not had, loſt or found, ſolely as a *Birth in Nature*, brought forth by the Faith, or magic Power of the Will of Man, working either with, or contrary to, the *redeeming Fiat* of God.

To make therefore a right Uſe of his Writings, you ſhould, for a ſufficient Time, keep ſolely to that Part of them, which opens the Ground and Foundation of the Powers that work in Grace and Nature, till by a ſelf-evident Senſibility it is opened in you, and your Heart ſtands in a Conformity to it, and true Working with it: For it is your own Heart, as finding the working Powers of Nature and Grace in itſelf, and ſimply given up in Faith to work with them, that is to be your Key and Guide to that Knowlege you are to have of them; whether it be from the Holy Scripture, or the Writings of this Author. For to this End, he tells you, he has written all; *viz.* To help Man to *ſeek* and find himſelf; what is his Birth, his State and Place in Nature; what he is in Body, Soul, and Spirit; from what Worlds all theſe Three Parts of him are come; how they came to be as they are at preſent; what his Fall is, and how he muſt riſe out of it. And therefore, if, in order to ſeek and find this Ground in your-

ſelf,

ſelf, you was, for ſome ſufficient time, to read only to the 10th or 12th Chapter of his *Three Principles*, or to the 6th or 8th Chapter of his *Threefold Life*; and proceed no farther, till this Ground had made itſelf manifeſt in you, and your Heart ſtood in a ſtrict Conformity to it, and Working with it; you would then be in a true Fitneſs to read farther, and reap the full Benefit from any other of his Books, that ſhould fall into your Hands; whether it was the *Way to Chriſt*, or the Book upon the *Incarnation*. But, above all Things, remember this Advice, as of the laſt Moment to you, *Be no Reaſoner upon the Myſtery*; ſeek for no Commentaries, or rational Explications of it, to entertain your Reaſon with: For, as ſoon as you do this; then, however true and good this Myſtery may be in itſelf, it is, with regard to you, of no better Uſe than that very vain *Philoſophy, and Science falſly ſo called*, condemned by the Apoſtle. It will only be the ſame Snare and Deluſion to you, that other Learning and Philoſophy is to other People. For if there is nothing good or divine in you but the Faith, and Hope, and Love, and Deſire of your Heart turned to God; if nothing can do any Good, be any

Bleſſing or Happineſs to this Faith, and Love, and Deſire turned to God, but only God himſelf in his *holy Being*; and if nothing can communicate God to you, but God himſelf; and if God cannot communicate himſelf to you under a *Notion*, or an *Idea* of Reaſon, but a Degree of *Life*, *Good*, and *Bleſſing*, born or brought to Life in your Soul; then you ſee, that to give yourſelf up to Reaſoning, and notional Conceptions, is to turn from God, and wander out of the Way of all Divine Communication.

Academicus. But if it be ſtrictly thus, *Theophilus*, had it not been better, that theſe deep Matters had not been communicated to the World, ſince it is ſo natural to Man to make a wrong Uſe of them?

Theophilus. This Objection, *Academicus*, comes with the ſame Strength againſt the Scriptures themſelves. For, excepting the *Seven thouſands* unknown in every Age, as in the Days of *Elijah*, and a few ſpiritual Fathers and Writers in almoſt every Age of the Church, bearing faithful Witneſs to the Truth and Myſteries of Religion, it muſt be ſaid, that human Learning, governed by human Reaſon, hath, from Age to Age, to this very Day, not only miſtaken the true

End

End and Uſe of the Scriptures, but hath turned them into an Occaſion of much Evil and Miſchief. The Scriptures ſpeak only to the Heart and Conſcience of Man, not to amend or enlighten it with Notions and Opinions form'd from the written Letter of the Word; but ſolely to make the *Being* and *Power* of God known and adored, and to awaken in Man a Senſibility of his Want of God; and to turn all the Power, and Strength, and Will of the Heart wholly to God, to receive Light, and Life, and Reſt, in his *holy Being*.

But to ſpeak now directly to your Objection: If I knew of any Perſon, who ſtood in the Faith and Simplicity of the firſt Chriſtians, free from all carnal Adherence, or vain Truſt, to Party-Notions, Doctrines, and Errors, brought forth by the Contention of Sects and Churches; whoſe Soul was dead to the earthly Nature, and all the Rudiments of this World, ſeeking only Light, Life, and Salvation, from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, living and dwelling in him, redeeming and ſanctifying his whole Body, Soul, and Spirit; To ſuch a one I could freely ſay, this Myſtery was needleſs; as having all that already which this Myſtery would do for

him. For its only End is, to bring Man out of all the Labyrinths of falſe and notional Religion, to this very firſt State and Simplicity of the Goſpel-Faith and Life.

And this may paſs for a good Reaſon why this Myſtery was not opened by God in the firſt Ages of the Church; ſince there was then no Occaſion for it. For Religion began, and went on, rightly, in its own true Way; it had the Faith and Heart of Man; it ſtood in its own proper Strength and Glory, and was an awakened Divine Life of Faith ſimply given up with Joy and Gladneſs to the Myſteries of the Goſpel; not wanting any *Why's* or *Wherefore's*, becauſe in the real Poſſeſſion of all the *Good*, and *Bleſſing*, and *Power*, of every Myſtery of Salvation.

But ſeeing a *worldly Spirituality*, called in Scripture the Whore riding upon the *Beaſt*, has had its Thouſand Years in the Church; ſince not only every Kingdom, but almoſt every Corner of Chriſtendom, has a *Babel* of its own, built upon ſome rational Interpretation of the Letter of Scripture; ſince learned Reaſon, *within* the Church, knows no other Uſe of Scriptures, but to reproach and condemn all other *Babels*, and to find Materials

to

to ſtrengthen its own; ſince Reaſon, *without* the Church, finds it as eaſy to reproach and condemn *all Revelation*, as it is to reproach all theſe *Babels* built upon it; ſince this is the finiſhed Confuſion, brought forth by the *Reaſon* and fleſhly *Wiſdom* both of thoſe that defend, and thoſe that oppoſe the Goſpel; how adorable is the Goodneſs of God in vouchſafing to theſe laſt Ages of the World ſuch a Remedy (*viz.* the Opening the Ground and Myſtery of all things) as is ſuitable to the diſtreſſed and confuſed State of Religion in the World! And how eaſy is it alſo to ſee the greateſt Reaſons, why this Remedy was not afforded ſooner! For as true Faith did not want it, and learned Reaſon, whilſt pleaſed with itſelf, could not be in a Condition to receive it; ſo it was highly ſuitable to the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God, not to give forth this Myſtery, till Reaſon, or fleſhly Wiſdom, had made Shipwreck of Faith; and had ſo filled up the Meaſure of its Folly, as to ſtand in its laſt and higheſt State of Diſtreſs, Perplexity, and Confuſion. For any Remedy is only then likely to be rightly received, when Diſtreſs and Perplexity makes the Want of it to be ſenſibly felt.

Let not therefore the genuine, plain, ſimple Chriſtian, who is happy and bleſſed in the Simplicity of Goſpel-Faith, take Offence at this Myſtery, becauſe he has no Need of it. For it is God's Goodneſs to the diſtreſſed State of the Church, fallen from the Life and Power of Goſpel-Faith, and groaning under the Slavery, Darkneſs, and Perplexity of bewildered Reaſon and Opinions.

Neither let the orthodox Divine, who ſticks cloſe to the Phraſes and Sentiments of Antiquity, reject this Myſtery as heretical, becauſe it opens a Ground of Man, and the divine Myſteries, not known or found in the primitive Writers. For this is the very Reaſon, why he ſhould thankfully receive it with open Arms, as having and being that very Thing, which the diſtreſſed divided State of the Church now ſo greatly wants; and yet did not want, till it was fallen from its firſt Simplicity of Faith. For whilſt Faith and Life defended the Myſteries of Religion, the Ground and Philoſophy of it was not wanted. But when Orthodoxy had given itſelf up to Reaſon, and had nothing elſe for its Support but Reaſon and Argument from the Letter of Scripture, without the leaſt Knowlege of the firſt Ground of Doctrines; then it could only

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be defended, as it is defended in every Sect and Diviſion of the Chriſtian World. For if Reaſon will defend the Myſteries of Redemption, without knowing the true Ground on which they ſtand, or why they muſt be as they are, from the Nature of the Thing; the more zealous and learned any Man is, the more Errors muſt he fall into in the Defence of them. For the greater the Strength is, that works without Light, the more Extravagancies it muſt produce. This is too viſible in all the Controverſies that have riſen in the Church. Now, that learned Reaſon, as preſiding in the Divinity-Schools, never yet had, nor could have, any Knowlege of the Ground of Man, and the Myſtories of Redemption, is plain from this one generally received Opinion of every Age to this Day; *viz. That all Things were created out of Nothing.* For this Maxim intirely excludes *all Poſſibility* of giving any Account of the Ground and Reaſon of any thing, either in the Nature of Man, or Religion; and is the ſame thing as ſaying, that Nothing has any Ground or Reaſon. For if that which begins to be comes out of Nothing, it can only have the Nature of that out of which it comes; and therefore can

have no more ſaid about it, why it is this or that, than can be ſaid of that Nothing, from whence it comes. And if the Myſtery, or Life of the human Nature, is out of Nothing, has no Reality of any antecedent Ground in it, out of which it came to be ſuch as it is, and to have that which it hath; then it is moſt certain, that all the Myſteries of the Religion of Man muſt come forth from the *ſame Nothing*, and have no antecedent Ground from whence they come, that requires them to be as they are. For Man, created out of Nothing, cannot have a Religion that is of any higher Deſcent than himſelf, unleſs he is to have a Religion that is quite unnatural to him. But a Religion that has its Ground in Eternity, muſt be an unnatural Religion to Man that comes up in Time, and out of Nothing. If therefore you will hold Man to be out of Nothing, you muſt of all Neceſſity hold all the Myſteries of the Religion of Man to be alſo out of Nothing; and that therefore no poſſible Account can be given either of the Ground of Man, or his Religion, or why there can be either Right or Wrong, Good or Evil, in either of them.

Hence you may ſee why the Truth has always ſuffered in every Controverſy of the Church;

Church: Thus, if you begin with that of St. *Auſtin* and *Pelagius*, about the Freedom of the human Will; do but ſuppoſe, what is Fact, that they both of them held the human Will to be created out of Nothing; and then you need not wonder at that Number of Volumes and Syſtems of Errors, which this Diſpute has brought forth. For who can ſay, what the Will is, or is not; what Nature or Power it muſt have, if it is created out of Nothing? Whereas, if either of theſe Diſputants had known, from a true Ground, what the human Will is; that it cannot be a made Thing, much leſs made out of Nothing; but that the Will of Angel or Man is the eternal uncreated Will become creaturely, as a true direct Birth from the Divine Will, deſcended from it, born out of it, and from thence come into a creaturely State; then they had known, that the Will of Angel or Man muſt have the Nature and Freedom of the eternal Will; and that its Freedom not only conſiſted in its Self-motion, but chiefly and moſt gloriouſly in this, that it could neither receive, nor have, nor be any thing, as to its Happineſs or Miſery, but according to its own Working: And then all that Predeſtinarian Learning of Decrees,

&c. that has tormented the Church ever since the Time of St. *Auſtin*, had been prevented.

Look next at the *Socinian* Controverſy. The *Socinians*, and their Opponents, met in the Field of Reaſon, to debate about the Fall, Original Sin, its Guilt, the vindictive Wrath of God, and the Neceſſity of ſatisfying the Divine Juſtice; the Neceſſity of the Incarnation, Sufferings, Death, and Satisfaction, of Chriſt. Theſe were the great Points to be tried at the Bar of Reaſon. Now all theſe Diſputants ſtood upon the old Ground; *viz.* that the Soul of Man, as well as all other Things, was created out of Nothing. And therefore they all ſtood abſolutely excluded from every Poſſibility of touching the true Ground or Reaſon of any one Doctrine in Debate. For the Soul, created out of Nothing, leaves no room to affirm, or even to ſuppoſe, that any thing can be affirmed of the Ground and Reaſon of Chriſtian Redemption. For ſurely, if the Soul of Man is created out of Nothing, it may and muſt with as much Senſe be affirmed, that it may be *redeemed by Nothing*; and he that affirms the one, can have no Pretence to deny the other.

Juſt the ſame may be ſaid of the preſent Controverſy betwixt the Chriſtians and Infidels, concerning Chriſtianity itſelf. You need not wonder, that ſo many learned Volumes have had ſo little Effect; or that the Defenders of Chriſtianity ſeem to loſe Ground, though the Infidels, at the ſame time, get no Advantage to their Cauſe, but that of increaſing their Numbers. For as neither Side can go any higher, than a Creation out of Nothing; ſo neither Side can ſay any thing from a true Ground, either for or againſt the Myſteries of the Goſpel. If therefore Infidelity increaſes, it is not becauſe it has got more Light, ſees further into the Depths of Nature, or ſtands upon a more rational Ground; but merely becauſe the Vanity and Blindneſs of the Diſpute has a natural Tendency to beget Indifference and Infidelity in the Hearts of Men.

Obſerve this Propoſition; *viz. In God we live and have our Being.* Now, how eaſy is it for any one to ſee, that no one can ſay any thing as to the Ground and Reaſons of the Myſteries of the Goſpel, either for or againſt them, till he can go to the Bottom of this Propoſition, and plainly ſhew, either how we do, or do not, live and move, and have our Being, in God! For the Truth or Falſeneſs of every

every Myſtery of the Chriſtian Redemption plainly depends upon this Matter. If the Chriſtian therefore will ſpeak to the Purpoſe, in Defence of the Ground of the Goſpel; he muſt be able to ſhew, that we ſo are in God, ſo have our Life in him and from him, and ſo move in him, as to prove, from thence, the Ground, the Neceſſity, and Certainty, of the Chriſtian Means of Redemption. On the other hand, the Deiſt cannot take one rational Step, or have any true Ground to ſtand upon, but ſo far as he can ſhew, that we are not ſo from God, have not ſuch a Nature in and from him, do not ſo live and move in him, as to have any *Want* or any *Fitneſs* for that Method of Redemption, which the Goſpel teaches. But as neither Side did this, though the one thing neceſſary to be done; ſo you alſo ſee, that neither Side had any Poſſibility of doing it. For the Soul, created out of Nothing, allows of no Inquiry, whether any thing of God be in it, or how it has its Life in him, or ſtands related to him. It admits of no ſearching after any Ground or Reaſon of its Good or Evil, or how it muſt have its Happineſs or Miſery from the Nature of the Thing. For if the *intelligent Life* itſelf muſt be ſuppoſed to come from no Ground, but

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to be created out of Nothing; then it is certain, that its Good and Evil, its Happineſs or Miſery, with every thing elſe, muſt be ſuppoſed to have no Ground or Reaſon for being as it is, but to be created out of Nothing; and may go again into Nothing, juſt as the Creator pleaſeth.

And now, Sir, you may enough ſee, how all Controverſy, both within and without the Church, has been ſo vain a thing. For Reaſon was to ſupport Doctrines and Myſteries, without the leaſt Knowlege of the Ground on which they ſtood; and Reaſon was to oppoſe them in the ſame Ignorance. You ſee alſo, why in theſe laſt Ages, where literal Learning has made ſo great a Figure, that the Matter has only been made worſe, and Diviſion and Error more triumphant. For as the Ground of the Truths was ſtill wanted, and nothing appealed to, but the Letter and Phraſe of Scripture; ſo the more artful and learned the Diſputants were in Reaſoning and Criticiſm, the more Abſurdities muſt be defended on both Sides. Why is not the learned Papiſt ſhocked at Tranſubſtantiation, or the Proteſtant at Predeſtination and Reprobation? It is becauſe each of them have enough of the *Truth* of Reaſon, and the *Good-*

neſs of Criticiſm, to draw the Letter of Scripture to his Side. And this you may be aſſured of, that Reaſon, and literal Learning, have juſt as good Eyes in every other religious Matter, and will give juſt ſuch an Account of every other Doctrine, when it comes into Diſpute, as the Papiſt and Proteſtant have done in theſe two Points. And the thing cannot be otherwiſe: As Deiſt and Chriſtian both hold a Creation out of Nothing, they muſt both have only an arbitrary God, and arbitrary Religion, that has no antecedent Ground to ſtand upon, but is left to the arbitrary Proof or Reaſon of both of them. What Thanks, therefore, are due to the Goodneſs of God, for opening this great Myſtery of all things in our Author, wherein the Right and Wrong, the True and Falſe, in Religion, is as manifeſt as any thing can be to our Senſes! Let no one therefore take Offence at the Opening of this Myſtery, as if it brought any thing new into Religion; for it has nothing new in it; it alters no Point of Goſpel-Doctrine, nor adds any thing to it, but only ſets every Article of the old Chriſtian Faith upon its true Ground, and in ſuch a Degree of Light, as, when ſeen, is irreſiſtible. It diſturbs no one, who is in Poſſeſſion of the Truth,

Truth, becauſe it points at nothing, drives to nothing, but to the opening the heavenly Life in the Soul. It calls no Man from any outward Form of Religion, as ſuch; but only ſhews, that no outward Form can have any Good in it, but ſo far as it only means, and ſeeks, and helps, the renewed Life of Heaven in the Soul. *A Chriſtian*, ſays he, *is of no Sect, and yet in every Sect*; a Truth which all Sects, as ſuch, will diſlike; and therefore a Truth equally wanted to be known, and equally beneficial to all Sects. For the chief Hurt of a Sect lies in this, that it takes itſelf to be neceſſary to the Truth; whereas the Truth is only then found, when it is known to be of no Sect, but as free and univerſal as the Goodneſs of God, and as common to all Names and Nations as the Air and Light of this World.

Suffer me now, before we part, once more to repeat what I have ſo often ſaid, that you would not receive this Myſtery as a Syſtem of rational Notions; nor do with it, as the World has, for the moſt part, done with the Bible, only gather Opinions of Reaſon and Speculation from it. For it opens no Depth of Nature or Grace, but to help you to the Heart and Spirit of the returning prodigal Son,

and

and to ſhew you the Blindneſs and Vanity of Reaſon and Opinions; and that Truth can have no poſſible Entrance into you, but ſo far as you die to your earthly Nature. The Goſpel ſaith all this to you in the plaineſt Words; and the Myſtery only ſhews you, that the whole Syſtem of the Univerſe ſaith the ſame thing. To be a true Student or Diſciple of the Myſtery, is to be a Diſciple of Chriſt; for it calls you to nothing but to the plain Letter of the Goſpel; and where-ever it enters, either into the Height or Depth of Nature, it is only to confirm the Truth of theſe Words of *Chriſt*; *viz. He that followeth not me, walketh in Darkneſs: And unleſs a Man deny himſelf, and forſake all that he hath, he cannot be my Diſciple.* This is the Philoſophy opened in this Myſtery. It is not to lead you after itſelf, but to compel you, by every Truth of Nature, to turn to *Chriſt*, as the one Way, the one Truth, the one Life, and Salvation of the Soul; not as notionally apprehended, or hiſtorically known; but as experimentally found, living, ſpeaking, and working, in your Soul. Read as long or as much as you will of this Myſtery, it is all Labour loſt; if you intend any thing elſe by it, or would be any thing elſe from it, but a

Man

Man dead to this World, that you may live unto God through *Chriſt Jeſus*, in the Power of Faith, and the Spirit of Prayer. With theſe Words upon our Minds, my Friends, let us now end this Converſation.

The End of the Third DIALOGUE.

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